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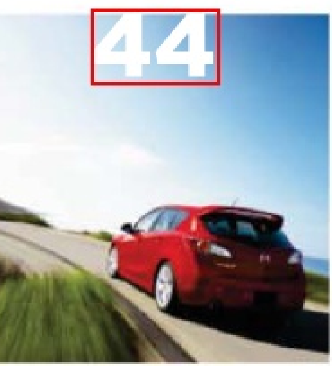
"Most Appealing Midsize Premium Car" — J.D. Power and Associates

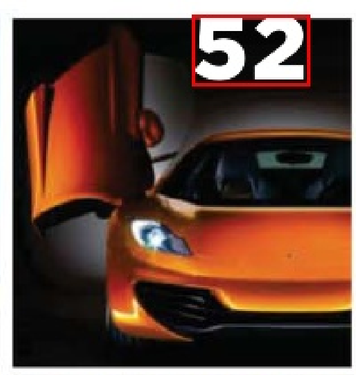




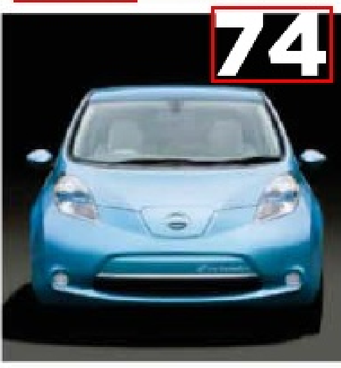
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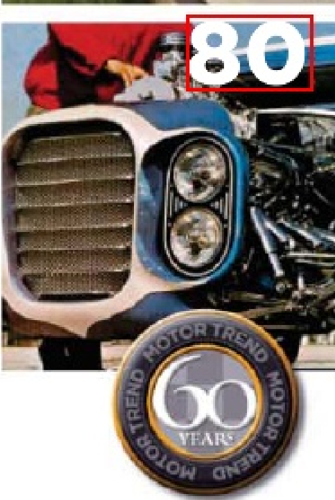


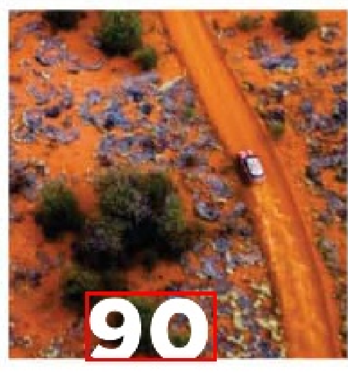














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continued on page 6

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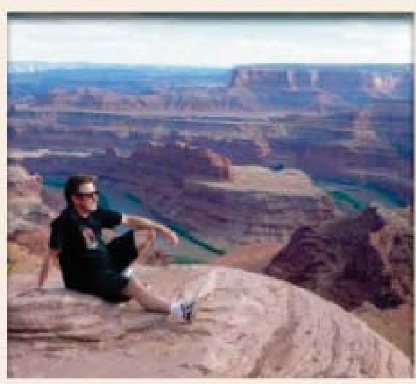




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what we've been up to...











BRAMLEY on approach to Uluru; Foster at Canyonlands, Utah; Kiino and MacKenzie check out Soviet-era kitsch in Bulgaria; Stone revisits Ferrari HQ; Loh on a downhill slide while trekking in California.

ON A HUMAN LEVEL
NO. 3 IN A SERIES

A better listening experience began with better listeners.



The Open Air Sound System, by visionary engineer Mr. Kazuhiko Otsuguro.

It seemed like an impossible assignment. Create an unrivaled audio system in a convertible that delivers an uncompromised experience, top up or top down. Mr. Otsuguro knew overcoming the poor acoustics and interfering wind noise of an open-air driving environment would require an unheard-of attention to detail. As well as several hundred hours of qualitative feedback in addition to conventional quantitative data.

But soon a promising idea came to him, literally, out of thin air. Why not cut the top off a G Coupe and learn what it would reveal? This was the liberating blank sheet Mr. Otsuguro and his team needed to experience their challenge firsthand. Allowing them to not only hear it, but also feel it. It was this insight that helped lead to the revolutionary Bose® Open Air Sound System* in the Infiniti G Convertible.

Working with Bose engineers, one of the team's first innovations was designing Personal® speakers in the front headrests. This allowed them to control the reflection of midrange sound and improve clarity. Then AudioPilot® 2.0 technology was incorporated to automatically optimize equalization and minimize the effects of unwanted outside noise. Mr. Otsuguro even insisted on the use of a Bose® digital amplifier with 11 channels of custom equalization to help tune the sound specifically for the whole vehicle. As a result, music is reproduced in clear, lifelike detail in any driving condition.

In all, it meant listening to his intuition as an engineer and, more importantly, as a driver. The outcome? A remarkable sonic environment custom-engineered to deliver rich, immersive audio. Top up. Or top down.

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GM: The New



2012 CADILLAC ATS COUPE

MARK STEHRENBERGER x2

GENERAL MOTORS outlined its new-model strategy into the 2013 model year and unveiled a few other new models further out into the decade in a recent press preview. No photos of the myriad new products were allowed or handed out.

We've predicted most of these in previous issues and at motortrend.com. There were a couple surprises, however. For one, the Super-Epsilon Cadillac, codenamed GM 166, which we broke at motortrend.com and in the July issue, isn't designed to slot in below the ATS (Alpha RWD platform) in price. It will be Cadillac's "flagship" until a proper large RWD sedan can be developed off Gen III CTS hardware.

The Chevrolet and GMC lineups are what we predicted, although the Aveo replacement won't get a name change to Viva. There's a new GMC on the way that undoubtedly was designed as a Pontiac, plus a new "baby Enclave" from Buick. There will be no Vuick, however. The biggest surprise was that GM's Executive Committee killed plans to make the Saturn Vue a Buick a week after the company showed a prototype to the press and to bloggers at the preview.

The Vuick fiasco was the product of two conflicting philosophies at the New GM: (1) Don't dilute any of the four core brands by creating models that don't fit a brand via badge engineering, and (2) Don't throw away any projects on which it has spent lots of money, such as the plug-in hybrid Vue. Or was the Vuick simply an elaborate public relations ploy?

Meanwhile, here's how GM's new model range shapes up:

CADILLAC

2012 ATS: Cadillac showed the coupe-version of its new BMW 3 Series-fighter, on its new, high-strength steel-intensive Alpha platform. It sports a thick, wedgy, and fast C-pillar, large sweptback rectangular headlamp covers surrounding a wider, squatter grille (reminiscent of the Mk I CTS's grille), a long dash-to-axle relationship and short front overhangs. A source says the coupe has a longer dash-to-axle and different dimensions from the Alpha sedan (illustrated), like the current 3 Series coupe versus sedan. Expected early in the 2011 calendar year, about the same time as the XTS' release.

2012 XTS: Cadillac has been working on a convergence of the STS and DTS, but the Super-Epsilon-based FWD/AWD large sedan, handsome as it is, is not an STS/DTS convergence. It replaces only the DTS. The profile sports a very fast C-pillar and powerful, masculine swag line, and the grille features the kind of high-cost detail previewed by the Converj concept. ATS and XTS are working names so far. Cadillac also noted it's working on an all-new RWD CTS, which should launch about the '13 model year. As the Mk II CTS continues to gain traction in the luxury car market, expect the Mk III CTS to grow longer and take over from the XTS status as Cadillac's flagship. Greater use of high-strength steel, a cost Cadillac can afford to absorb, would allow the CTS to grow in size without adding the same proportion of pounds.

CHEVROLET

2012 SPARK: Retains much of the Beat hatchback concept's design, with four doors instead of two. While smaller than the Aveo, Chevy figures it has an "aspirational" design people will want because it's small, not because it's cheap. Features include ambient lighting and the motorcycle clusterlike instrument panel.

2012 AVEO: It's an astonishing design improvement over the current car, with a

Model Lineup

fast, wedgelike shape and wheels pushed out to the corners. To be available as a four-door sedan and a hatchback, it sports the biggest headlamp to front-end size ratio we've seen. On the hatchback, rear door handles are hidden in the window frame, Alfa Romeo-style. GM said the car will be built in several factories around the globe, but declined to confirm what we already know: that it's headed for Orion Township, Michigan. Launches first in calendar '11, just ahead of the Spark.

2011 CRUZE: Chevrolet now says the 1.4-liter turbo version will get "about 40 mpg highway." A 1.8-liter naturally aspirated four will be standard. It's on sale in the U.S. in the second quarter of 2010.

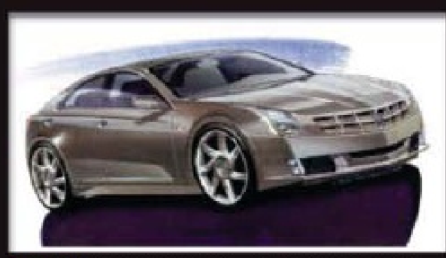
2011 VOLT: GM believes the Environmental Protection Agency test cycle will result in a city figure of at least 230 mpg.

2012 ORLANDO: Looks just like the 2009 Detroit show concept. With three capacious rows of seats and four conventional doors, it's designed to be a Mazda5 competitor with more of a crossover look.

2013 MALIBU: Has a hard act to follow. Moves to Epsilon II on the shorter of its two wheelbases, 107.8 inches (from 112.3 inches currently) as shared with the Opel Insignia. Overall length is even shorter. The interior gets a further upgrade, with an unusual horizontal heating/air-conditioning vent that runs through the width of the dashboard, which is covered with a new, leather-like pad. The trunk is improved for size and ease of loading. The exterior features a prominent hood bulge and two-piece taillamps—it looks like a stretched Cruze.

2012 CAMARO CONVERTIBLE: Delayed one more quarter, to the second quarter of 2011. Chevy has switched top suppliers.

OTHERS: Trucks are on the back burner. Chevrolet confirms there will be a new Impala. We don't expect one before the '13 model year, and the Super-Epsilon platform appears to be a possibility. The C7 Corvette may make the '13 model year, but '14 is more likely.



2012 CADILLAC ATS SEDAN



2012 SPARK



2011 CRUZE



2012 ORLANDO



2011 REGAL

BUICK

2012 COMPACT: As we reported last month, it shares its Delta platform with the Chevrolet Cruze and Opel Astra, but it gets the upcoming Astra sedan's sheetmetal and upgraded chassis. Buick believes the C-segment compact soon will surpass the C/D-segment midsize as the predominant sedan size in the U.S. market.

2012 "BABY ENCLAVE": Based on a hybrid Gamma/Delta platform, the small, tall, five-seat crossover will need a good dose of interior elegance to offset its inelegant proportions.

2011 REGAL: We drove this car in China earlier this year and reckoned it was a no-brainer for the United States. General Motors, after some dithering, now seems to agree. The midsize sedan is a rebadged Opel Insignia and, as the Vuick was initially designed to replace a Saturn, in this case, the Aura. It rides on the same 107.8-inch wheelbase as the '13 Malibu and has a very nicely appointed interior.

OTHERS: The Enclave is due for an update for '13. It's not likely to be a major change. The new-for-'10 LaCrosse becomes Buick's flagship car when the Lucerne goes away after '10. GM is likely considering a switch to the Super-Epsilon platform for 2015.

GMC

2011-12 SOUL/XB/CUBE-FIGHTER: GMC showed a small, boxy four-door hatchback concept that obviously was designed to be a Pontiac, before GM pulled the plug on the idea of making that division a "niche brand." We hear the vehicle is slated to become the new entry-level model in Buick-GMC dealers.

2011 ACADIA DENALI: GM says there's virtually no cross-shopping between the Acadia and Enclave in Buick-GMC dealers. Is that still true if there's an Acadia Denali?

■ todd lassa

Is VW Taking Porsche Mainstream?

Wolfsburg wants three new models, more volume



WE SPOKE with Martin Winterkorn, Volkswagen Group chief, just days after the denouement of the VW-Porsche takeover saga. Porsche had to give up its four-year attempt to take over VW and was itself taken over. Porsche CEO Wendelin Wiedeking lost his job while VW chief Martin Winterkorn got named CEO of the new combine, which will merge in 2011. And shortly after Wiedeking departed, German prosecutors raided his office and others to investigate possible market manipulation.

Winterkorn was, as expected, in an expansionist mood. How many cars might Porsche build a year? "There's no limit," he said. Is 150,000 worldwide possible? "Why not?"

He advocated doing this by 2012 or 2013, by entering new sectors with new models. (Porsche had sold 98,652 cars between July 2008 and July '09.) Winterkorn later told Germany's *Manager Magazin* that Porsche should add three new cars, including one smaller than the Boxster.

This ties in with a strategy outlined in our reports in past months. VW brand chief Ulrich Hackenberg told *Motor Trend* the BlueSport mid-engine roadster needs a sister car from another brand to make a business case. It would make a good Audi R4, but that might sit uneasily alongside the TT roadster. From a new fuel economy/emissions standard perspective, an entry-level four-cylinder Porsche (top photo) does make sense.

At least to Winterkorn it does.

Porsche management, including new CEO Michael Macht, has spoken against making a car cheaper than the Boxster. They no longer call the shots. They're not against expanding Porsche, as they did first with the Cayenne and now with the Panamera. They want the expansion to be measured, and done with expensive vehicles.

Winterkorn is also considering reviving a Porsche twin (bottom photo) to the Audi Q5 small SUV. The tie-up between the Cayenne, Touareg, and Audi Q7 has been a sales success for all three brands. As with the new Touareg, ("Trend," September), the new Cayenne is on its way. It still uses the Touareg platform, this time in Mk II form. It's based on the original but is lighter in base-model form, by making heavyweight off-road hardware optional.

The design has a more Porschelike nose: The hood cutline comes forward between the headlights. The new model gets more profiled side panels with obvious shoulders over the rear wheels. The tailgate is faster, and the third side window more rakish and triangular.

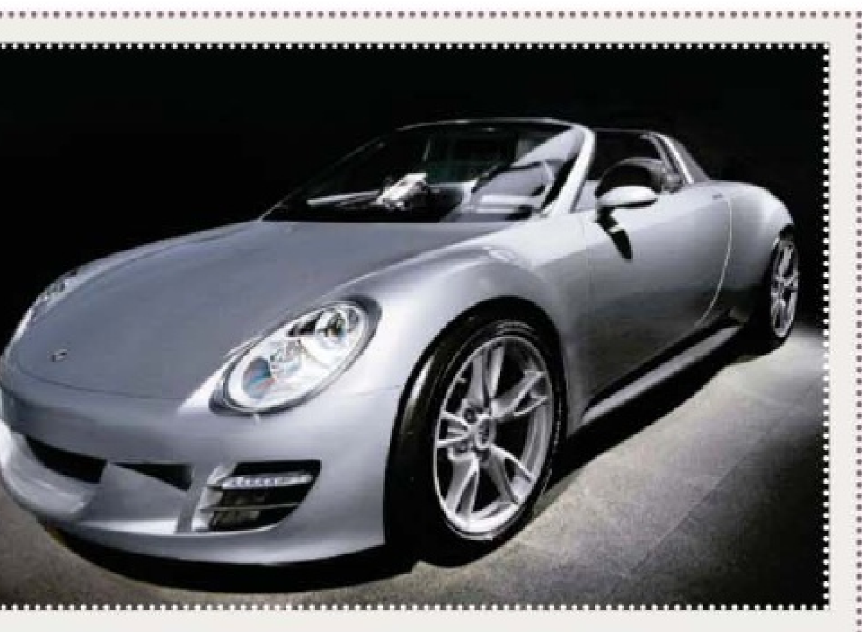
The cabin features a dash architecture and switchgear rather like the Panamera's. The main new engine is the supercharged V-6 hybrid edition. Other powertrains continue with little change. The new Cayenne will be shown in 2010 for sale in 2011.

■ **paul horrell**

VW Chases Camry, Accord

Targets up to 300,000 U.S. sales with New Midsize Sedan

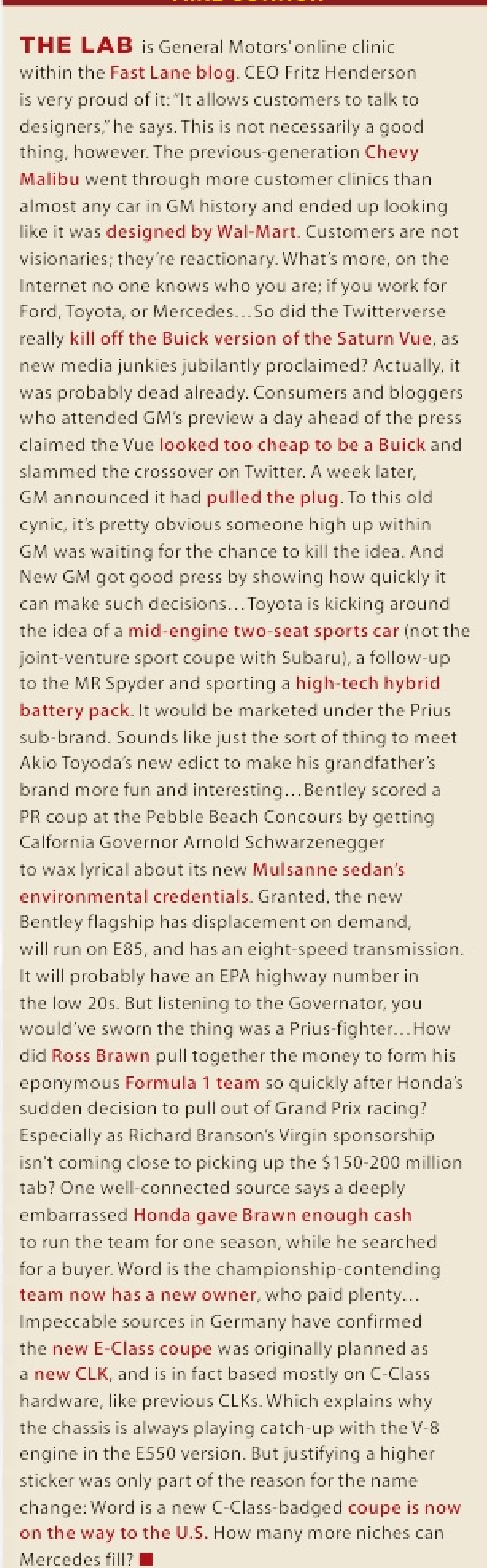






VOLKSWAGEN'S New Midsize Sedan (NMS) may displace the smaller Passat from the North American market, says VW chief Ulrich Hackenberg. The NMS is aimed, in terms of size, power, price, and taste (read: lots of big cupholders), directly at the heartland of cars such as the Camry, Accord, Fusion, and Malibu, but with VW's premium feel. VW will start building the car in early 2011 in its new Chattanooga, Tennessee, assembly plant. It will be joined later by a Jetta replacement designed with the States in mind. Hackenberg says he hopes to sell 150,000 NMSes a year initially, with plant capacity expandable to 300,000. VW currently sells about 50,000 Passats in the U.S. in a good year. To get the necessary quality, VW will use many of the same suppliers as Mercedes' Alabama plant. The critical thing for the NMS is its costs will be low because it's built locally and because some of the Passat's expensive running refinement and noise/vibration/harshness suppression hasn't been engineered in. In line with the group's push for clean diesel, it will be offered with a TDI option as well as four and V-6 gas engines, mounted transversely. A double-clutch transmission is also on the list. It gives better fuel efficiency than a conventional auto.

The NMS is part of VW's Golf-Passat platform matrix. The imported Passat is smaller than the domestic-built NMS, but would need to sell at a similar price, and by VW's own reckoning have no higher visible quality. The Chattanooga car will sell beyond the bounds of the Americas: It will also be built in China as a replacement for the local long-wheelbase Passat, called Passat Lingyu. ■ **paul horrell**



• MT CONFIDENTIAL •

MIKE CONNOR

THE LAB is General Motors' online clinic within the Fast Lane blog. CEO Fritz Henderson is very proud of it: "It allows customers to talk to designers," he says. This is not necessarily a good thing, however. The previous-generation Chevy Malibu went through more customer clinics than almost any car in GM history and ended up looking like it was designed by Wal-Mart. Customers are not visionaries; they're reactionary. What's more, on the Internet no one knows who you are; if you work for Ford, Toyota, or Mercedes… So did the Twitterverse really kill off the Buick version of the Saturn Vue, as new media junkies jubilantly proclaimed? Actually, it was probably dead already. Consumers and bloggers who attended GM's preview a day ahead of the press claimed the Vue looked too cheap to be a Buick and slammed the crossover on Twitter. A week later, GM announced it had pulled the plug. To this old cynic, it's pretty obvious someone high up within GM was waiting for the chance to kill the idea. And New GM got good press by showing how quickly it can make such decisions… Toyota is kicking around the idea of a mid-engine two-seat sports car (not the joint-venture sport coupe with Subaru), a follow-up to the MR Spyder and sporting a high-tech hybrid battery pack. It would be marketed under the Prius sub-brand. Sounds like just the sort of thing to meet Akio Toyoda's new edict to make his grandfather's brand more fun and interesting… Bentley scored a PR coup at the Pebble Beach Concours by getting California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to wax lyrical about its new Mulsanne sedan's environmental credentials. Granted, the new Bentley flagship has displacement on demand, will run on E85, and has an eight-speed transmission. It will probably have an EPA highway number in the low 20s. But listening to the Governator, you would've sworn the thing was a Prius-fighter… How did Ross Brawn pull together the money to form his eponymous Formula 1 team so quickly after Honda's sudden decision to pull out of Grand Prix racing? Especially as Richard Branson's Virgin sponsorship isn't coming close to picking up the $150-200 million tab? One well-connected source says a deeply embarrassed Honda gave Brawn enough cash to run the team for one season, while he searched for a buyer. Word is the championship-contending team now has a new owner, who paid plenty… Impeccable sources in Germany have confirmed the new E-Class coupe was originally planned as a new CLK, and is in fact based mostly on C-Class hardware, like previous CLKs. Which explains why the chassis is always playing catch-up with the V-8 engine in the E550 version. But justifying a higher sticker was only part of the reason for the name change: Word is a new C-Class-badged coupe is now on the way to the U.S. How many more niches can Mercedes fill? ■

C-Max Now Global Ford



Ours will be a seven-seater



FORD'S big Frankfurt show splash triggers the beginning of the new, global Blue Oval. A dozen years ago, the North American Focus launched with hopes we would get a small, C-segment Ford as good as the European one. Instead, it was brought down by recall problems and lacked the European model's constant updates.

The 2011 Focus, which also underpins the C-Max and makes its debut at January's Detroit show, is different. Ford says the '11 Fiesta coming to America will share 60 to 70 percent of its parts worldwide. The '11 Focus and Focus C-Max will score more like 75- to 80-percent common parts. And suppliers of the new Focus will make the same parts and components around the world.

Europe gets a five-passenger and a new seven-passenger C-Max, while North America is slated just for the seven-passenger C-Max, so far. There's good reason for this: Ford also will update the Escape/Mariner C-segment crossover, a big seller here but not overseas.

The U.S.-bound Focus C-Max looks much like this five-passenger model in a front-three-quarter view, but the seven-passenger model will have minivan-style sliding rear doors. It's more Mazda5 competitor than Chevy Orlando competitor.

Ford isn't talking engines, but an updated version of the current Focus' 2.0-liter four will be standard, and a new 1.6-liter EcoBoost engine will be optional in the Focus/C-Max lineup. A 2.0-liter EcoBoost four could power a hot hatch version of the Focus up to a year after the 2010 launch.

Ford says it's growing its North American sub-C/D-class (Fusion/Milan/MKZ) lineup from four models (two- and four-door Focus, Escape, and Mercury Mariner) to nine: four- and five-door '11 Focus (the two-door is being cut), Focus C-Max, the Focus BEV (Ford counts its electric version as a separate car) a C-segment Mercury on the Focus platform, and two '11 Fiestas, four- and five-door.

Like General Motors, Ford sees huge growth in sub-C/D cars in the coming decade. Ford and GM are selling much better-equipped compacts and four-cylinder midsize cars at higher transaction prices these days than in the recent past. This is important to Ford's strategy: Popular C-segment cars already sell for the equivalent of $25,000 to $30,000 in Europe.

■ **todd lassa**

No Fusion EcoBoost. Yet

We'll have to wait until MY 2013

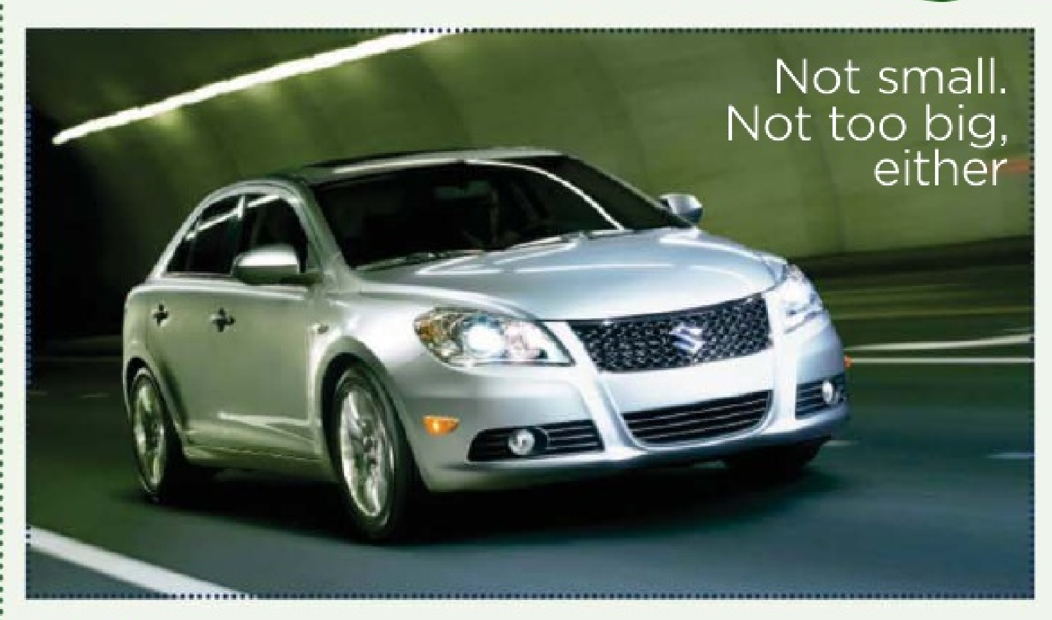
SO WE jumped the gun reacting to EcoBoost Fusion mules spotted around Dearborn. Fact is, Ford will not launch its first four-cylinder EcoBoost (turbocharged, gas direct-injection) in the 2011 Fusion midsize sedan. That car will have to wait until its next complete redesign, expected for the '13 model year. Meanwhile, the first four-cylinder EcoBoost will be a 1.6-liter engine expected as an option in the Focus and Focus C-Max. The 2.0-liter EcoBoost is likely to be introduced in a performance Focus before the next Fusion gets it. ■





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Suzuki's Shrinking Kizashi



Not small. Not too big, either

KIZASHI is not a "tweener" car, a Suzuki official told *Motor Trend* at the official unveiling of the production model recently. It was always meant to be a C/D-segment sedan. Still, we couldn't help but think that it had lost ... something.

Suzuki previewed three concept versions at auto shows around the world, including a 2.0-liter turbodiesel four wagon and a 3.6-liter V-6 sedan. The V-6 was the clue. It was to be the same gas direct-injection engine found in the Cadillac CTS and Chevy Camaro. But General Motors sold 17 percent of its 20-percent stake in Suzuki in 2006 and then sold the remainder in November 2008 for $230 million, as it sought loan guarantees to float it through the Great Recession.

The production Kizashi, we reported, was to be built on GM's Epsilon platform, possibly in a North American factory (as was the discontinued XL7). The three Kizashi concepts had the same size wheelbase as the Chevrolet Malibu, 112.2 inches. Instead, the Kizashi is built in Japan. It launched with a 2.4-liter inline four, and Suzuki brass are coy about a V-6 option, although a hybrid version using the four is in the cards, and a turbo-four is likely. The production Kizashi's wheelbase is listed at 106.3 inches, even though length has grown over the concept by 0.1 inch, to 183.1.

So the Suzuki Kizashi is just slightly bigger than the Chevrolet Cruze (178.5 inches long on a 105.7-inch wheelbase). Its wheelbase is slightly shorter than the Epsilon II platform's Opel Insignia (107.8 inches) although it's 7.1 inches shorter overall than that car.

Clearly, Suzuki's separation from GM changed plans for a midsize car, although Suzuki holds a stake in GM's Daewoo Automotive. GM's bankruptcy and paring down to four brands intervened. With Suzuki's North American sales hit particularly hard during the recession, an "international"-size car, whether you consider it C- or C/D-segment, made more sense than a larger midsize. And in the end, Suzuki may be in a better position as most automakers expect Americans to shift from midsize to compact cars in the coming decade.

■ **todd lassa**

BAR TALK: MAKING YOU THE INSTANT EXPERT

THIS MONTH: THE EPA'S HEROES AND VILLAINS

UNDER ENVIRONMENTAL Protection Agency testing methods, General Motors says, the 2011 Chevrolet Volt will achieve at least 230 mpg in city driving. That would go a long way toward meeting Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards of 35.5 mpg for cars and 30 mpg for trucks by 2016. This got us to thinking: Which cars and trucks got the best and worst EPA figures since CAFE was established in 1984? Even those numbers have changed; a stricter 2008 standard lowered fuel mileage estimates for most models. Here are some of the best and worst of the past 25 years, expressed using both the new formula's numbers and the original estimates that appeared on window stickers:

MOST FUEL-EFFICIENT
2000 HONDA INSIGHT
■ 2008 formula: 49/61 mpg/53 mpg combined
■ Window sticker: 61/70 mpg/65 mpg combined

BEST CITY MILEAGE
2010 TOYOTA PRIUS
■ 51 mpg (48 mpg highway, 50 mpg combined)

WORST GAS-GUZZLER
1988 LAMBORGHINI COUNTACH
■ 2008 formula: 6/10 mpg/7 mpg combined
■ Window sticker: 6/10 mpg/8 mpg window sticker

WORST HIGHWAY NUMBER
1984 ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER SPUR LIMOUSINE
■ 2008 formula: 9 mpg (7 mpg city/8 mpg combined)
■ Window sticker: 9 mpg (8 mpg city/9 mpg combined)

SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Hyundai keeps pressure on

Shows new Tucson, confirms Equus for U.S.



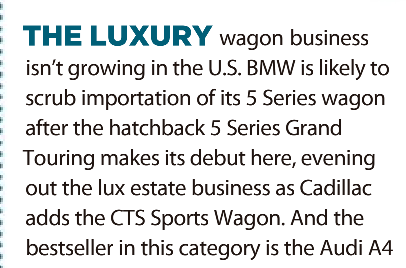
AFTER a spring/summer tour of U.S. dealerships, Hyundai announced it will import the new Equus flagship sedan here, beginning in summer or fall 2010. Target is the Lexus LS, though the pricey Equus (sticker is expected to be between $50,000 and $60,000) could also pick up near-lux buyers left stranded by the disappearance of the Lincoln Town Car.

Although the South Korean version doesn't include groundbreaking technology as do a Mercedes S-Class or BMW 7 Series, U.S.-spec models will include such equipment as adaptive cruise control. Launch powertrain is likely to be the new 5.0-liter direct injection version of the Tau V-8, which will drive the rear wheels through a new eight-speed automatic transmission. Our versions will also likely get a more toned-down grille, and much crisper steering and suspension tuning.

Hyundai showed its MY 2011 replacement for the Tucson compact crossover at Frankfurt. Conceived and designed at the automaker's Frankfurt-based design/tech centers, the ix35 is its latest model to benefit from a newfound emphasis on design. Hyundai hints the ix35 name will replace Tucson in North America. ■

Against the grain

Benz still believes in lux wagons for the U.S.

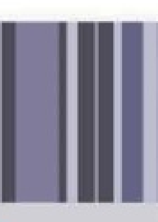


THE LUXURY wagon business isn't growing in the U.S. BMW is likely to scrub importation of its 5 Series wagon after the hatchback 5 Series Grand Touring makes its debut here, evening out the lux estate business as Cadillac adds the CTS Sports Wagon. And the bestseller in this category is the Audi A4 Avant, which moves about 4000 units here in a good year.

That's not enough to keep the king of luxury import wagons away, though. The latest generation of the Mercedes-Benz E-Class wagon goes on sale in the U.S. in June 2010. Why is it the king? Because it gives up the "sport wagon" conceit and the fast D-pillar in favor of a more



(your say)



letter of the month

church, grandkids, cars

He was the fire chief, and with the city's money, my dad, who was the head mechanic at the local Chevy dealer, bought a junked fire truck from Warner Robbins Air Force base and rebuilt it. The Jackson, Georgia, fire department had a special phone arrangement so citizens could dial one number and all volunteer firefighters would drop everything, head to the firehouse, and follow the big truck to the flames. But one evening, Dad got the call on our regular home number because the KKK had set fire to a big cross in a local man's yard. My father rushed to the scene, put out the fire by himself. The next night, men wearing white hoods began driving by our house. But my two brothers and I just waved at everyone in the procession, because we knew who owned every car that drove by. The drive-by ended almost immediately. See, this was the early '50s, and the three Rooks kids were way into cars as were most of our cohorts. I'm still in that mode, a 67-year-old female. Cars are right up there after my church and grandkids when it comes to joy. Particularly loved "The Birth of a Notion" column (September 2009). I'm glad the car industry is a part of American life.

Beverly Wittler
McDonough, Georgia

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6420 Wilshire Blvd.
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motortrend.com
or send an e-mail direct to
motortrend@motortrend.com

■ letter of the month wins!
Ms. Wittler wins this groovy '49 Mercury Surf Woodie 1/24-scale metal model from The Danbury Mint. DanburyMintDieCast.com



blue devil versus blue angel

I came to Texas via Pensacola, Florida, and worked hand in hand with the Blue Angels through radio. After reading your story (my wife and I had a great Sunday morning chuckling through it), we wanted to pass along our sentiments. Many of my radio coworkers made it into the Blue Angel #7 cockpit, but nobody made us feel like we were actually in it ourselves, feeling the gs. We also felt like we were along for the ride in Blue Devil; and with everything that's going on with GM, it's nice to see somebody giving credit where credit is due. Thanks again!

Evan and Becca Chancey
Temple, Texas

Thank you, Mr. St. Antoine and Mr. Allison, for the Blue Angel F/A-18 versus Corvette ZR1 story. The eloquent words about naval aviators brought back some pride to this old enlisted air crewman from the Vietnam era, and as a car enthusiast, the pictures of "Jet versus Vette" were phenomenal. Kudos all around for subjects well chosen.

Neil Cleveland
Walpole, Massachusetts



Just received my August issue of your magazine. The front cover is the Blue Devil ZR1 Corvette pictured with a Blue Angel F/A 18 Hornet aircraft above. I have my own picture of my car, a 1957 Ford Thunderbird, with the Blue Angel #2. It was taken at the Marine Corp Air Station in Beaufort, South Carolina. Long-time subscriber; enjoy your magazine!

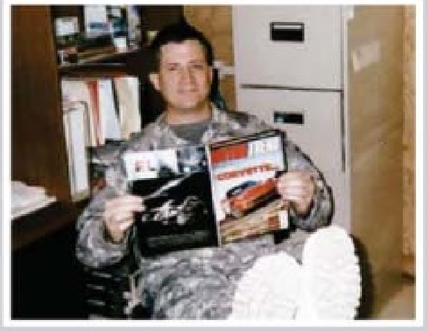
Peter Eisenberg
Pawleys Island, South Carolina

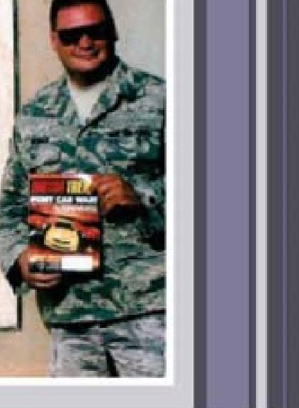
Sorry, guys, Luke Air Force Base beat you to the supercar versus fighter-jet thing. Started about three years ago, at our Luke Days air show. A local Viper Club brings their race team out to Luke and does a drag race: Viper versus Viper (new name for F-16 Falcon since Lockheed took over). The race usually goes to the modified, race-only Viper, but the jet usually wins against the stock Viper. It's pretty fun to watch as the squadron that flies against the car, the 309th Wild Ducks, is my

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Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret) Steven Kelley sent these images of his sons, 1st Sgt. Troy and TSgt. Jim. Troy watched for insurgents placing IEDs and "loves his new Challenger," writes Dad. Jim repaired runways and built roads near Baghdad International Airport.

old unit, and the prep on the jet takes priority before the big event, e.g., stripping pylons, launchers, etc., anything to get an edge. You should check it out sometime.

Aaron Harms, TSgt, USAF
308 Emerald Knights (new unit of assignment), 56 Fighter Wing
Luke Air Force Base, Arizona

We should. But our first "Jet versus Vette" story appeared in our June 1986 issue, when we pitted a twin-turbo, 200-mph Corvette against Chuck Yeager's Northrop T-38 Talon.—Ed.

if you have to ask...

You guys really must be running low on ideas. What is the point of putting a souped-up Vette up against an F/A-18 Hornet?

Brent South
Muscle Shoals, Alabama

thin blue line

Really enjoyed St. Antoine's article comparing the Blue Devil Corvette with the Blue Angels' F/A-18 Hornet. Both are incredible rides and the "race" made a great read. However, I have to question what appears to be the need to Photoshop the planes used in the article. Clearly, Lt. Walborn's plane is #7, a two seat F/A-18 with his name. But, the #7 shown racing the Corvette on the bottom of page 39 is only a single seat-cockpit with a different name on the side. I'm no aviation expert, but these are obviously not the same planes. Taking the license to unnecessarily distort reality detracts from the credibility of the article and does a disservice to your readers.

Glenn Boundy
Fort Pierce, Florida

Okay, come clean. You didn't really expect that no one would notice that there were two different jets with the number 7 on them, did you? The one shown on the cover and in the "cool down" photo is clearly a single-seater with a different pilot name on the side. The one used for the actual video was the two-seater with two names on the side. I'm also guessing the cover photo was a Photoshop job; the plane wasn't really that close to the Vette.
Mike Forman
Henderson, Nevada

No conspiracy. The Blues' two-seat #7 wasn't available for all of our photography, so a few of the team's single-seaters filled in. We added the 7s for continuity—fully expecting you more persnickety types to notice.—Arthur St. Antoine

High-horse brigade

While reading the August issue on "Devil versus Angel," your Arthur St. Antoine made a very unfortunate remark concerning the pilots of the Blue Angels. The comment read: "Clearly, testing hot cars for a living is one of the few jobs in the world (maybe *Playboy* photographer too) that can make a fighter jock envious." Here's where I stopped reading what this undisciplined man had to say. Is it reasonable to assume that Art would take advantage of foolish young girls so they can be exploited for selfish reasons? If this pervert thinks that way it is one thing, but to impose his immoral attitude concerning this cancerous industry onto the top of their class, highly disciplined, and motivated servants of America's safety is inexcusable. This would demand an apology to these pilots. I guess Art couldn't conceive of these people trading their careers for something righteous and good.
John Klucznik
Via the Internet

for the record

In our October Long-Term Verdict for the 2008 Accord EX-L V-6, the number of recalls should read "None."

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ring engagement

Now I know why drivers are entranced by the Nordschleife. And terrified of it

■ illustration **doug fraser**

AS WE exit the autobahn, first I see the castle, the medieval Tower of the Nürburg, an Oz of crumbling stone atop the rolling Eifel hills. Minutes later, like lightning flashes escaping the tenebrous forest, I catch fleeting glimpses of coiled asphalt—or is it a serpent safeguarding its keep above? Across much of the black skin lie German words and graffiti stains etched in colorful chalk.

Our car pulls into the pits. Above, dark clouds are threatening rain. I walk to the pit exit but can see only one corner, which drops away sharply left before disappearing into the trees. What lies beyond kept me up most of the previous night.

Today I will take my first laps around the Nürburgring Nordschleife, "the Ring," Jackie Stewart's "Green Hell," the most challenging and dangerous racetrack on earth. Whereas most circuits average two or three miles in length, the Ring, completed in 1927, rises and falls and feints for...13.

Stewart hated the Ring but drove his greatest race here, winning the monsoon-like 1968 German Grand Prix by *four minutes*. In 1957, "the maestro" Fangio, taking shocking risks, caught and passed two dominating Ferraris in his underpowered Maserati. And within these turns—now officially 73 of them—several dozen brilliant drivers have crashed to their deaths (in 1976, Niki Lauda suffered his nearly fatal burns here; F1 cars never raced on the Nordschleife again).

Because the Ring is open to anyone willing to pay for a lap (now 22 euros; about $31), amateur drivers and motorcyclists continue to perish every year—officially three to five on average, 50 annually if you believe the lore. My AMG hosts (I'm here to drive the new SLS AMG Gullwing; *MT* October) tell the apocryphal story of a motorcyclist who showed up at the Ring alone, plowed into the trees, and disappeared until a hiker discovered his helmeted skeleton three years later.

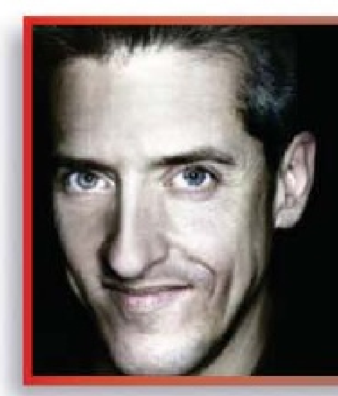
Time to face the serpent, to become a driving Dante amid the Green Hell. Enveloped in Nomex and belted into a 451-horsepower Mercedes C63 AMG sedan, I ease out of the pits behind AMG development boss Tobias Moers (he in an SL65 AMG). Immediately Moers plants his throttle. I'm focused on remaining on Moers' bumper, yet distracted. I can't shake the stony gaze of invisible observers; the spectacle of long-faded skidmarks in the tarmac that's trying to unseat my shrieking tires. We rocket up a steep incline, then Moers brakes hard just before we pitch over Flugplatz ("flying place"). Soon we're nearing 130 mph through the downhill Schwedenkreuz (Stewart says here his F1 Tyrrell would top 170 mph). Hard on the binders, then back on the power through Fuchsröhre ("the foxhole"). Moers is quick but careful. There is zero margin for error. The guardrail looms just feet away. Everywhere.

The lap goes on. Bergwerk (Lauda's crash), the bowl-like Carousel, ricocheting like a billiard ball through Pflanzgarten. And on. It's intoxicating, driving this hard for this long without retracing your path again and again. Outside several turns, car fans with picnic baskets line the fence, undoubtedly waiting to see who or what crashes next. Nearly nine minutes pass. Then we start our second lap.

That night, again I lie awake, this time trying to imagine how anyone raced a Formula 1 machine making 500 to 800 horsepower or more, open wheel to open wheel, around this perverse, tree-lined tightrope.

If you want to sleep, Arthur, better not think about it. ■





> PLASMA DISCHARGES FORM IN AS LITTLE AS 100 NANOSECONDS—ABOUT AS LONG AS IT TAKES THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SPEND $13.

light fantastic

Ford lasers will shoot first, ask questions later

■ illustration **nigel buchanan**

THE WEAPON of the future, the blunderbuss of Buck Rogers, may soon be aimed at the air-fuel mixture inside your "spark-ignition" engine. Yes, after reinventing practically every other element of Old Smokey, the spark plug—virtually identical in its essential form and function to the one patented 111 years ago—may soon be ditched in favor of laser beams.

First let's examine the case against Sparky. Despite laudable upgrades like long-lived platinum tips, computer-controlled coil-on-plug ignition, and even fancy multispark electrodes, there's no getting around a few basic drawbacks: The spark gets generated very near the cylinder wall, which complicates cold starts when all that engine metal is frigid and results in lots of heat transfer to the engine and plug. The flame front also has to travel farther for a complete burn of the mixture. Spark-plug electrodes wear, and providing for easy replacement dictates placing the plug right where bigger valves and direct fuel injectors want to be.

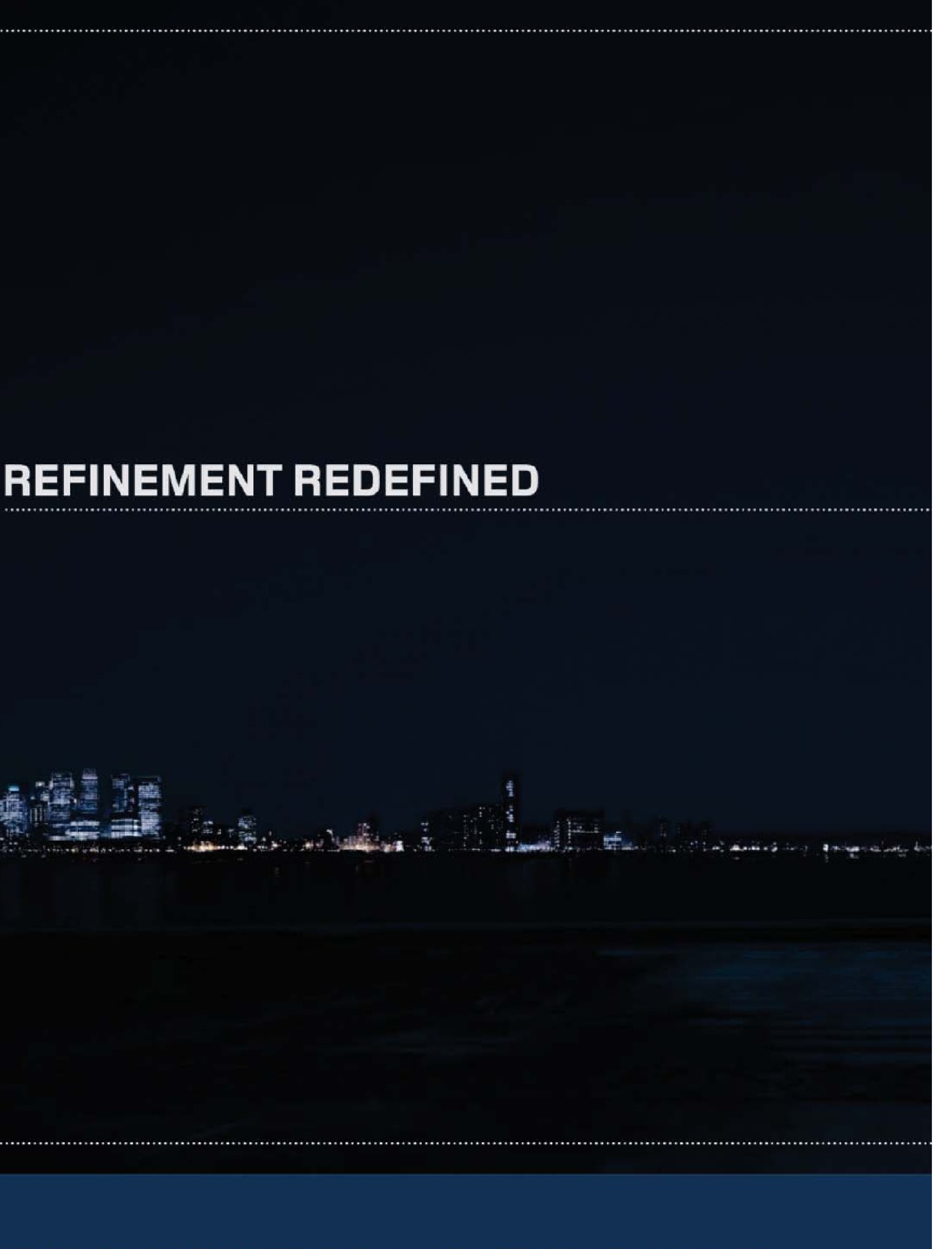
Laser ignition promises a way around all these shortcomings. Researchers at Colorado State University began working on laser ignition for heavy-duty natural-gas engines back in 2002, and more recently Ford and the University of Liverpool in the U.K. have teamed up to develop a passenger-car application. Here's how it works: A near-infrared laser beam shines through a lens that focuses the light at a particular point (or possibly at multiple points) in the cylinder, generating intense energy that causes the air molecules to ionize. This creates a plasma discharge (it looks like a spark formed in mid air) that ignites the air-fuel mixture. Such plasma discharges form in as little as 100 nanoseconds (100 billionths of a second—about as long as it takes the federal government to spend $13). Regular sparks last some 8000 times longer, so it's possible to create numerous laser plasma blasts during a single combustion stroke. And the laser's energy is expected to keep the lens blasted clear of soot automatically, so no maintenance is likely to be required. Leaner operation promises greater fuel efficiency, while more complete combustion at lower temperatures should reduce emissions (nobody's talking percentages yet).



But perhaps the real genius of laser ignition is its ability to diagnose the spent combustion gasses after ignition. By fitting the lens with a receiver to pick up laser light reflected back through the exhaust cloud the engine controller can measure how completely the fuel is burning (particularly during cold starts) or determine what type of fuel was burned (in flex-fuel cars) and adjust accordingly. This added sophistication should help bring homogeneous-charge compression-ignition (HCCI, the gas engine with near diesel efficiency, "Technologue," December 2007) closer to reality and the ability to produce multiple sparks throughout the cylinder might also help bring ammonia-fueled engines to the fore ("Technologue," November 2008).

Getting that laser light into the cylinder is tricky. One laser per cylinder would be easy but far too costly. Splitting a single laser source into multiple beams aimed down light pipes with mirrors presents problems with vibration and packaging. Fiberoptic cables are most convenient, but in early trials normal materials lost up to 20 percent of the laser energy in tighter bends and the cables deteriorated rapidly. The Colorado State folks devised special hollow, silver-lined, helium-filled fiber optic wires that seem up to the task.

Those certainly sound pricier than spark-plug wires, and a laser probably rings in higher than a handful of coils. Nobody's talking price yet, but I expect the incremental cost (and fuel-economy benefit) for laser ignition will be slightly less than that of direct fuel injection. But slap a "Laser-Fired" badge on it, and the Sci-Fi set will happily pony up. ■

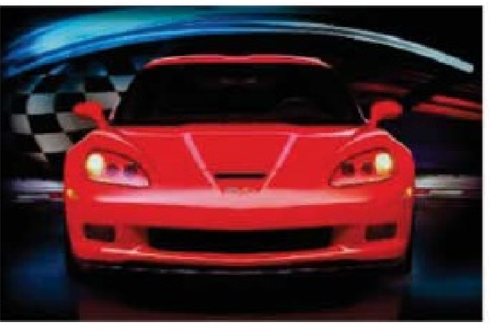

REFINEMENT REDEFINED
THE NEW 2010 RANGE ROVER THE LUXURY THAT'S MORE THAN A LUXURY


LAND
ROVER

a grand design

THE CORVETTE TEAM CUTS AND PASTES UP AN AWESOME NEW MODEL FROM EXISTING PARTS

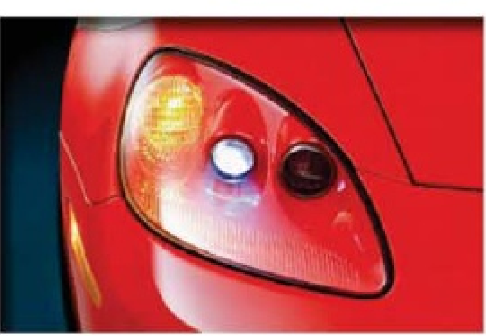
words **frank markus**
photographs **wesley allison**















NOW HERE'S a Corvette after Martha Stewart's heart. The domestic diva is forever transforming things found around the house into lovelier new things that sit around the house. In these rather tough times, the Corvette team has taken a page from Martha's book, ripped it out, and headed to the garage. By scrounging up some of their best performance hardware, they've managed to cobble up a new car that just might be cool enough to warrant resurrection of the storied Grand Sport moniker.

Underneath all the shiny/pretty, it's a base steel-frame LS3-powered Vette, to which are fitted a mix of Z51 performance package parts (spring rates, closer-ratio manual transmission gearing and shorter axle ratio on the automatic), and Z06 bits (front and rear fascias, hood, anti-roll bars, brake rotors and calipers, wider tires, and the bodywork to cover them). The dry-sump oiling system from the Z06 and ZR1 is also fitted to manual Grand Sports, which means these special motors will now be hand-assembled alongside their big-brother stablemates, the LS7 and LS9 engines in Wixom, Michigan, each by a single technician who'll sign his work. The only major parts they had to tool up were the front fenders—which feature double-gill cove styling and are made of RIM plastic like the base car's—the rear quarter panels, unique new wheels, and the actual springs and dampers tailored to the GS's unique weight and characteristics (they ride almost exactly like the old Z51's.

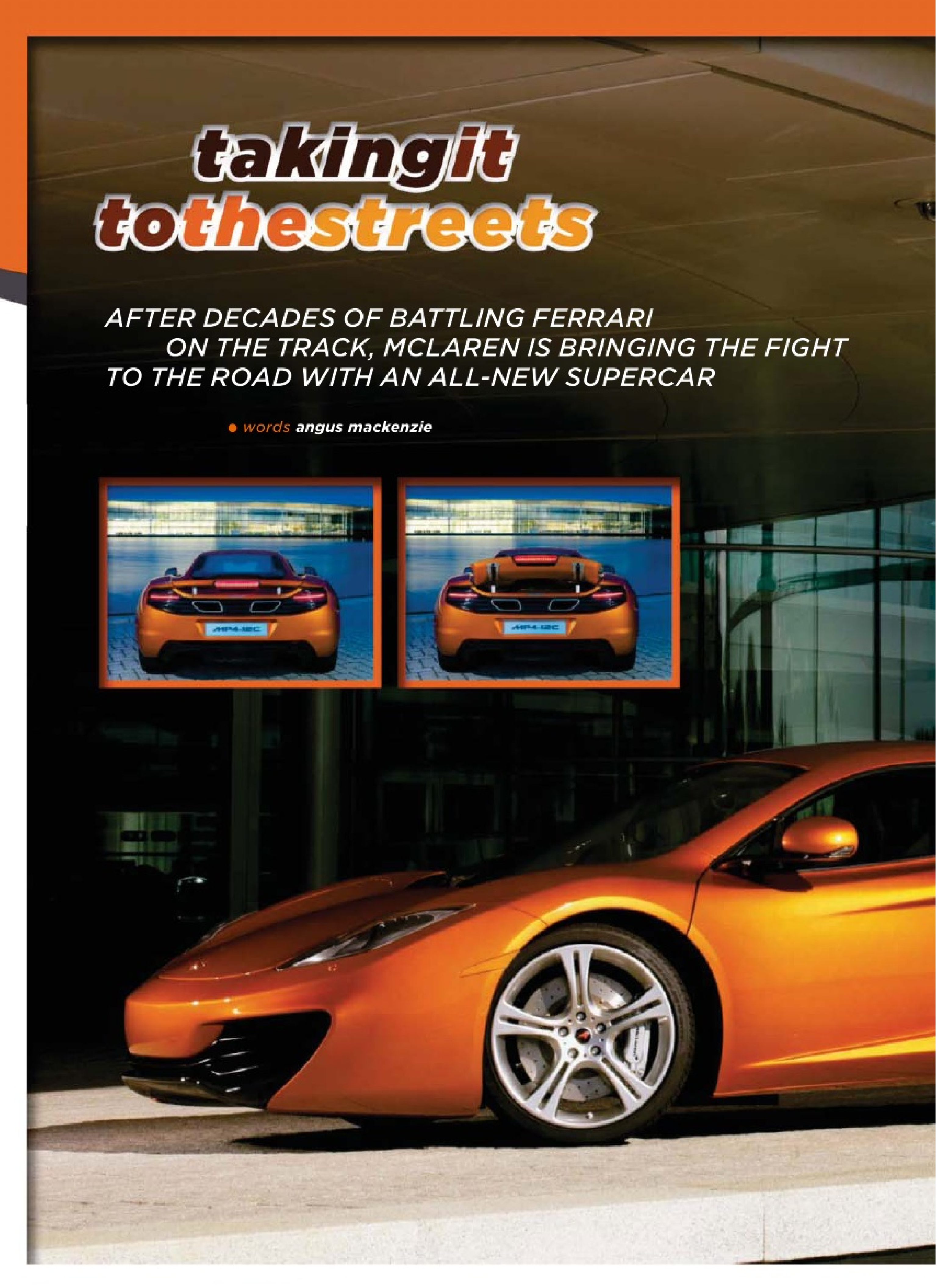

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CAN LINCOLN'S BEAT THE



taking it to the streets

AFTER DECADES OF BATTLING FERRARI ON THE TRACK, MCLAREN IS BRINGING THE FIGHT TO THE ROAD WITH AN ALL-NEW SUPERCAR

● *words* ***angus mackenzie***





EXHAUSTS exit high, keeping plumbing to a minimum and allowing room for the rear diffuser. Rear wing is integrated into overall form.

The suspension and powertrain components are hung off lightweight aluminum subframes bolted to the front and rear of a molded carbon-fiber core structure that weighs just 176.4 pounds. This core structure, dubbed the MonoCell, is a truly innovative piece: While the Porsche Carrera GT's carbon-fiber chassis was made up from 1000 separate pieces patched together by hand, and took one week to complete, the McLaren's is resin molded in just four hours.

Suspension is double wishbone all around, with coil springs and hydraulically interconnected shocks that allow adaptive damping and adjustable roll control. The AP Racing brakes are composites, featuring cast iron rotors mounted on forged aluminum bells, saving 17.6 pounds per corner over conventional brakes. Carbon ceramic brakes will be available as an option.

The MP4-12C's exterior is the work of another American, designer Frank Stephenson, whose credits include the new Mini, the Fiat 500, as well as a stint as Ferrari's design chief. The non-structural aluminum and composite panels are wrapped tightly around the 105.1-inch wheelbase. The car's signature graphic is the swooping intake scoops on either side, which riff off the McLaren logo shape.

The exhausts exit high, above the license plate, keeping the amount of plumbing required to a minimum (hence saving weight) and allowing uninterrupted real estate for the rear diffuser. A rear wing is integrated into the overall form, somewhat like that of the Acura NSX. On the McLaren, however, the center section pivots to deploy as an airbrake that also helps move the center of aerodynamic pressure toward the rear of the car under heavy braking and can be set at a higher angle of attack to generate more downforce.

Stephenson's interior is minimalist, yet elegant and spacious for a two-seater. The graceful center stack is reminiscent of that of the Porsche Carrera GT and features a seven-inch touch-screen mounted in portrait fashion, instead of the traditional landscape scenario. The screen accesses functions such as audio, navigation, and telephony.

The center stack also contains buttons for engine start/stop, dynamic-control activation, a winter-driving mode, and launch control. Two rotary switches manage powertrain and handling, the former changing throttle response, transmission shift strategy, shift times and feel, with a coaxial Manual button controlling the use of manual transmission functions, the latter changing stability control, steering weight, suspension firmness and roll stiffness, with a coaxial Aero button that deploys the rear spoiler into high downforce mode.

The MP4-12C is the first in a range of McLaren sports cars, and though no one will elaborate further, you have only to look at the Ferrari F430 playbook to guess what's coming: A convertible version and an ultralight track-oriented model are no-brainers. The MP4-12C will also be a global car, built in left- and right-hand drive, and the company is already talking with potential dealers in the United States, which is expected to take 25 percent of the 1000 cars a year initially planned.

"I'd love to aspire to be Ferrari," says Dennis candidly, in answer to the obvious question. And he believes McLaren has the credentials to take on the storied Italian marque: "No disrespect to any sports car brand, but few can list 20 World Championships and wins at Indy and Le Mans," he says. That's true, as not even Ferrari can claim racing's triple crown. And if the MP4-12C drives anywhere near as well as its specification suggests, the guys at Maranello had better be on their game. ■

2011 MCLAREN MP4-12C

BASE PRICE	$220,000-$250,000 (est)
VEHICLE LAYOUT	Mid-engine, RWD, 2-door, 2-pass coupe
ENGINE	3.8L/600-hp (est)/442-lb-ft twin-turbo, DOHC 32-valve V-8
TRANSMISSION	7-speed twin-cl auto
CURB WEIGHT	3100 lb
WHEELBASE	105.1 in
LENGTH	177.4 in
ON SALE IN U.S.	2011

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P225/75 R-16 97	265/65 R-17 133	P275/65 R-18 156
235/70 R-16 107	265/70 R-17 129	285/60 R-18 162
P235/75 R-16 105	P285/70 R-17 143	P235/55 R-19 133
245/70 R-16 112	235/55 R-18 130	P245/55 R-19 166
P245/75 R-16 105	235/60 R-18 133	P255/60 R-19 162
275/70 R-16 124	235/65 R-18 137	P245/50 R-20 161
225/65 R-17 107	245/60 R-18 138	P265/50 R-20 163
235/65 R-17 110	255/55 R-18 144	275/45 R-20 186
P235/75 R-17 115	P255/65 R-18 149	P275/55 R-20 167
245/65 R-17 117	P255/70 R-18 128	P285/45 R-22 216

Blizzak DM-Z3

P215/70 R-15 $69	P235/75 R-17 $105	P265/60 R-18 $126
P215/75 R-15 69	P245/70 R-17 105	P265/70 R-18 118
235/75 R-15 95	P245/75 R-17 95	275/60 R-18 125
P235/70 R-16 89	265/70 R-17 114	265/45 R-21 287
P245/75 R-16 79	235/55 R-18 119	
225/65 R-17 103	235/60 R-18 115	

Blizzak LM-18

145/65 R-15 $66	175/55 R-15 $84

Blizzak LM-25

195/55 R-15 $77	255/35 R-18 $226	RFT (Runflat)
185/55 R-16 85	255/40 R-18 199	205/55 R-16 $139
205/45 R-16 88	255/45 R-18 150	205/50 R-17 149
235/45 R-17 109	225/40 R-19 175	225/45 R-17 189
235/45 R-17 149	225/40 R-19 175	245/50 R-17 211
225/40 R-18 156	225/45 R-19 148	245/45 R-18 247
225/45 R-18 185	255/35 R-19 185	255/40 R-20 358
225/50 R-18 162	275/35 R-19 188	285/35 R-20 394
225/60 R-18 153	265/35 R-19 149	

Blizzak LM-25 4X4

275/55 R-17 $206	RFT (Runflat)
235/60 R-18 190	235/55 R-18 $268
285/45 R-19 248	255/50 R-19 339

Blizzak LM-60

215/45 R-17 $144	245/45 R-18 $199	275/35 R-19 $276
225/45 R-17 150	255/40 R-18 210	245/40 R-20 272
235/45 R-17 160	255/45 R-18 205	245/45 R-20 260
235/50 R-17 168	265/35 R-18 234	P245/50 R-20 247
235/55 R-17 158	275/35 R-18 234	255/35 R-20 293
245/40 R-17 171	225/40 R-19 215	255/45 R-20 269
215/45 R-18 177	225/45 R-19 205	RFT (Runflat)
225/40 R-18 172	235/35 R-19 243	195/55 R-16 $138
225/45 R-18 184	245/40 R-19 234	205/45 R-17 158
225/50 R-18 186	245/45 R-19 223	225/40 R-18 211
P225/60 R-18 182	255/35 R-19 264	255/40 R-18 240
235/45 R-18 188	255/40 R-19 252	255/55 R-18 254
235/50 R-18 201	255/50 R-19 228	
245/40 R-18 199	265/35 R-19 265	

Blizzak WS60

175/65 R-14 $71	215/65 R-15 $88	205/50 R-17 $133
175/65 R-14 76	215/70 R-15 85	215/45 R-17 127
185/60 R-14 74	195/60 R-16 85	215/50 R-17 135
185/65 R-14 77	185/55 R-16 102	215/55 R-17 115
185/70 R-14 73	195/55 R-16 106	215/60 R-17 107
195/60 R-14 77	205/50 R-16 109	P215/65 R-17 101
195/70 R-14 75	205/55 R-16 107	225/45 R-17 137
145/65 R-15 68	205/60 R-16 90	225/50 R-17 142
175/55 R-15 83	205/65 R-16 92	225/55 R-17 119
175/65 R-15 73	215/55 R-16 109	225/60 R-17 108
185/60 R-15 76	215/60 R-16 96	235/45 R-17 152
185/65 R-15 76	215/65 R-16 94	235/60 R-17 112
195/55 R-15 90	225/50 R-16 119	245/45 R-17 153
195/60 R-15 81	225/55 R-16 114	225/40 R-18 153
195/65 R-15 82	225/60 R-16 101	235/40 R-18 162
205/60 R-15 85	P225/65 R-16 99	245/40 R-18 166
205/65 R-15 88	235/60 R-16 106	245/50 R-18 159
205/70 R-15 82	235/65 R-16 105	
215/60 R-15 87	205/40 R-17 115	

Blizzak LM-50 RFT (Runflat)

225/60 R-17 $123

Blizzak MZ-03

165/65 R-14 $70

Blizzak W965

215/85 R-16 $136	245/75 R-16 $145	245/70 R-17 $157
225/75 R-16 132	265/75 R-16 151	265/70 R-17 168
235/85 R-16 144	LT235/80 R-17 157	

General Tire

Altimax Arctic (studdable)

175/70 R-13 $45	205/60 R-16 $70	215/45 R-17 $111
175/65 R-14 56	215/55 R-16 80	215/50 R-17 106
185/65 R-14 60	215/60 R-16 75	215/55 R-17 100
185/70 R-14 51	215/65 R-16 79	215/60 R-17 99
185/60 R-15 60	225/55 R-16 94	225/45 R-17 105
185/65 R-15 61	225/60 R-16 79	225/55 R-17 105
195/55 R-15 75	225/70 R-16 83	235/45 R-17 114
195/60 R-15 63	LT225/75 R-16 126	235/55 R-17 116
195/65 R-15 63	235/60 R-16 93	235/65 R-17 113
205/60 R-15 65	235/75 R-16 97	LT235/80 R-17 142
205/65 R-15 67	LT235/85 R-16 127	245/65 R-17 120
205/70 R-15 61	LT245/75 R-16 129	265/65 R-17 128
215/60 R-15 72	255/70 R-16 105	265/70 R-17 118
215/65 R-15 71	265/70 R-16 109	LT265/70 R-17 154
215/70 R-15 67	265/75 R-16 104	LT285/70 R-17 172
225/70 R-15 71	LT265/75 R-16 133	
205/55 R-16 78	205/50 R-17 91	

Dunlop

Graspic DS-3

175/70 R-13 $57	205/65 R-15 $77	225/60 R-16 $97
175/70 R-14 65	205/70 R-15 75	215/45 R-17 128
185/60 R-14 65	215/65 R-15 85	215/50 R-17 129
185/65 R-14 68	215/70 R-15 78	215/55 R-17 121
185/70 R-14 64	205/50 R-16 77	215/60 R-17 106
195/70 R-14 66	205/55 R-16 96	225/45 R-17 136
185/60 R-15 70	205/60 R-16 77	225/55 R-17 123
185/65 R-15 72	205/65 R-16 83	235/45 R-17 139
195/55 R-15 87	215/55 R-16 107	225/50 R-18 179
195/60 R-15 75	215/60 R-16 88	225/55 R-18 173
195/65 R-15 76	215/65 R-16 89	
205/60 R-15 75	225/55 R-16 108	

SP Winter Sport 3D

195/65 R-15 $96	225/50 R-17 $152	245/40 R-18 $219
205/65 R-15 90	225/55 R-17 157	255/35 R-18 226
205/55 R-16 98	235/45 R-17 157	255/40 R-18 233
205/55 R-16 108	235/55 R-17 196	255/45 R-18 240
215/55 R-16 112	235/65 R-17 141	265/35 R-18 256
205/60 R-16 108	245/40 R-17 181	285/35 ZR-18 277
215/55 R-16 119	245/45 R-17 166	235/35 R-19 225
215/65 R-16 116	255/45 R-17 195	225/50 R-17 251
225/55 R-16 124	225/40 R-18 179	275/45 R-19 246
205/50 R-17 136	235/40 R-18 199	RFT (Runflat)
215/55 R-17 149	235/40 ZR-18 203	195/55 R-16 $118
225/45 R-17 147	235/50 R-18 231	245/50 R-18 299
225/45 R-17 149	235/60 R-18 175	245/45 R-19 275

SP Winter Sport M3

225/60 R-15 $112	215/50 R-17 $140	245/50 R-18 $197
205/45 R-16 124	215/55 R-17 137	ROF (RunOnflat)
215/60 R-16 105	225/45 R-18 185	205/55 R-16 $138
225/50 R-16 129	235/45 R-18 206	225/45 R-17 187
225/60 R-16 116	245/45 R-18 224	225/50 R-17 205
235/60 R-16 119	255/35 R-18 203	
215/45 R-17 137	255/40 R-18 215	

Pirelli

Scorpion Ice & Snow

215/65 R-16 $96	235/60 R-18 $161	255/50 R-20 $267
215/70 R-16 97	235/65 R-18 168	265/45 R-20 247
225/70 R-16 110	255/55 R-18 162	275/40 R-20 265
235/70 R-16 107	255/55 R-18 175	275/50 R-20 281
245/70 R-16 112	255/60 R-18 176	295/40 R-20 285
255/65 R-16 119	235/55 R-19 166	295/35 R-21 298
225/65 R-17 117	255/50 R-19 217	P275/45 R-22 358
235/60 R-17 143	255/55 R-19 195	RFT (Runflat)
235/65 R-17 131	265/50 R-19 217	255/55 R-18 $203
245/65 R-17 152	265/55 R-19 235	255/50 R-19 252
255/60 R-17 147	275/45 R-19 212	275/40 R-20 317
265/65 R-17 164	285/45 R-19 223	315/35 R-20 348
275/55 R-17 173	245/45 R-20 235	
235/55 R-18 146	255/45 R-20 243	

Winter 190 Snowcontrol

165/65 R-13 $52	155/60 R-15 $73	175/65 R-15 $62
145/65 R-15 77	175/55 R-15 82	

Winter 190 Snowcontrol Serie II

185/60 R-15 $66	195/60 R-15 $75	205/55 R-16 $113
185/65 R-15 71	195/65 R-15 69	

Winter 210 SnowSport

245/50 R-17 $179

Winter 240 SnowSport

205/45 R-17 $165	235/40 R-18 $210	265/40 R-18 $267
205/50 R-17 170	235/40 R-18 216	RFT (Runflat)
225/40 R-18 214	235/40 R-18 232	205/45 R-17 $179
225/45 R-18 169	265/35 R-18 274	

Winter 210 Sottozero

225/55 R-16 $147	225/55 R-18 $207	RFT (Runflat)
215/60 R-17 178	225/60 R-18 159	205/50 R-17 $181
235/55 R-17 171		225/45 R-17 212

Winter 240 Sottozero

225/55 R-17 $201	255/35 R-18 $229	265/40 R-19 $361
235/45 R-17 199	265/40 R-18 278	265/35 R-20 432
215/45 R-18 204	275/40 R-18 335	RFT (Runflat)
225/45 R-18 216	285/40 R-18 350	245/45 R-17 $222
235/40 R-18 232	295/35 R-18 322	225/40 R-18 258
235/45 R-18 244	255/40 R-19 333	245/40 R-18 268
235/50 R-18 255	275/40 R-19 360	255/35 R-18 326
245/40 R-18 239	285/35 R-19 381	

Winter 210 Sottozero Serie II

215/45 R-17 $175	215/55 R-17 $193	245/45 R-17 $240

Winter 240 Sottozero Serie II

205/55 R-17 $179	265/40 R-18 $285	285/35 R-20 $471
225/45 R-17 201	275/45 R-18 360	RFT (Runflat)
235/50 R-17 236	295/35 R-18 336	215/40 R-18 $246
235/40 R-18 241	235/35 R-19 285	245/35 R-18 332
245/50 R-18 270	295/30 R-19 355	
255/40 R-18 269	255/40 R-20 425	

Winter 270 Sottozero Serie II

255/35 ZR-19 $382	275/35 ZR-20 $489	275/35 R-20 $583
235/45 R-20 449	RFT (Runflat)	
245/35 ZR-20 456	245/40 R-20 $480	

Winter Carving (studdable)

185/65 R-14 $78	195/55 R-15 $100	225/45 R-17 $167
185/70 R-14 88	195/60 R-15 91	225/55 R-17 169

Winter Carving Edge (studdable)

175/65 R-14 $79	205/55 R-16 $119	225/55 R-16 $147
185/60 R-14 82	205/55 R-16 155	225/60 R-16 149
185/65 R-15 86	205/60 R-16 118	225/50 R-17 212
195/65 R-15 85	215/65 R-16 136	235/65 R-17 169
205/60 R-15 92	215/55 R-16 188	255/55 R-18 195
205/65 R-15 106	215/60 R-16 162	255/60 R-18 196
195/55 R-16 148	215/65 R-16 112	

Michelin

Latitude Alpin HP

235/55 R-17 $187	235/50 R-18 $194	255/50 R-19 $274
235/65 R-17 193	255/55 R-18 237	

Latitude Alpin HP ZP RFT

255/55 R-18 $217

Latitude Alpin

265/70 R-16 $137	265/65 R-17 $152	275/40 R-20 $208
225/65 R-17 130	235/60 R-18 154	

Latitude X-ICE

P215/75 R-15 $99	255/65 R-16 $140	245/70 R-17 $135
225/70 R-15 99	265/70 R-16 129	255/70 R-17 142
P235/75 R-15 115	275/70 R-16 142	265/65 R-17 147
265/70 R-15 119	215/65 R-17 108	235/55 R-18 154
245/70 R-16 120	235/65 R-17 132	
P245/75 R-16 118	245/65 R-17 136	

Pilot Alpin PA3

205/55 R-16 $126	225/55 R-17 $175	235/45 R-18 $188
205/50 R-17 168	235/45 R-17 193	245/40 R-18 223
215/50 R-17 169	235/55 R-17 179	245/45 R-18 218
215/55 R-17 165	225/40 R-18 200	255/45 R-18 227
225/45 R-17 177	225/45 R-18 183	255/45 R-19 212
225/50 R-17 178	235/40 R-18 206	285/40 R-19 276

Pilot Alpin PA2

205/50 R-17 $155	245/45 R-18 $220	265/40 R-18 $252
235/40 R-18 213	255/40 R-18 228	295/35 R-18 300
235/40 R-18 216	265/40 R-18 250	

Primacy Alpin PA3

195/60 R-15 $107	205/60 R-16 $113	205/45 R-17 $153
195/65 R-15 104	215/55 R-16 129	215/45 R-17 156
205/65 R-15 107	215/65 R-16 125	225/45 R-17 159
205/50 R-16 137	225/50 R-16 141	225/45 R-17 167
205/55 R-16 122	225/55 R-16 138	225/55 R-17 153

X-ICE Xi2

175/70 R-13 $68	205/70 R-15 $89	215/45 R-17 $142
175/65 R-14 80	215/65 R-15 104	215/50 R-17 138
175/70 R-14 75	215/70 R-15 92	215/55 R-17 135
185/60 R-14 86	195/55 R-16 114	215/60 R-17 117
185/65 R-14 81	205/50 R-16 128	215/65 R-17 114
185/70 R-14 80	205/55 R-16 122	225/45 R-17 149
175/65 R-15 81	205/60 R-16 107	225/50 R-17 137
185/55 R-15 96	205/65 R-16 108	225/55 R-17 138
185/60 R-15 87	215/55 R-16 129	225/60 R-17 133
185/65 R-15 88	215/60 R-16 112	235/45 R-17 153
195/55 R-15 103	215/65 R-16 106	235/55 R-17 149
195/60 R-15 93	225/55 R-16 114	215/45 R-18 150
195/65 R-15 94	225/60 R-16 116	225/45 R-18 164
205/60 R-15 96	235/60 R-16 119	225/60 R-18 148
205/65 R-15 99	205/50 R-17 132	245/45 R-18 179

Firestone

Winterforce (studdable)

175/70 R-13 $44	185/65 R-15 $60	205/60 R-16 $66
175/65 R-14 55	195/60 R-15 59	215/55 R-16 79
185/60 R-14 57	195/65 R-15 62	215/60 R-16 71
185/65 R-14 60	205/60 R-15 63	P225/50 R-16 85
185/70 R-14 49	205/65 R-15 65	225/60 R-16 77
P185/75 R-14 49	205/70 R-15 55	215/55 R-17 84
195/70 R-14 53	P205/75 R-15 53	P215/65 R-17 80
P195/75 R-14 49	215/60 R-15 68	225/50 R-17 109
205/70 R-14 51	215/65 R-15 66	225/55 R-17 87
P205/75 R-14 51	215/70 R-15 54	225/60 R-17 84
215/70 R-14 53	P265/75 R-15 67	235/55 R-17 89
185/60 R-15 58	205/55 R-16 77	225/60 R-18 92

Winterforce UV (studdable)

P215/75 R-15 $56	P215/70 R-16 $67	P255/70 R-16 $75
225/70 R-15 61	P225/70 R-16 68	P265/70 R-16 78
P225/75 R-15 57	P225/75 R-16 68	P265/75 R-16 73
P235/70 R-15 63	P235/65 R-16 82	P235/65 R-17 90
P235/75 R-15 62	P235/70 R-16 71	P265/70 R-17 85
P235/75 R-15 65	P245/70 R-16 72	245/65 R-17 92
215/65 R-16 70	P245/75 R-16 70	P245/70 R-17 78

Continental

ExtremeWinterContact

175/70 R-13 $55	215/55 R-16 $103	215/45 R-17 $127
175/65 R-14 64	215/60 R-16 92	215/50 R-17 124
185/65 R-14 69	215/65 R-16 92	215/55 R-17 121
185/70 R-14 63	225/55 R-16 110	215/60 R-17 114
185/60 R-15 72	225/60 R-16 96	225/45 R-17 130
185/65 R-15 71	225/70 R-16 98	225/55 R-17 117
195/55 R-15 87	LT225/75 R-16 143	235/45 R-17 138
195/60 R-15 71	235/60 R-16 105	235/55 R-17 132
195/65 R-15 71	235/75 R-16 111	235/65 R-17 127
205/60 R-15 73	LT235/85 R-16 142	LT235/80 R-17 171
205/65 R-15 77	245/75 R-16 109	245/65 R-17 129
205/70 R-15 73	LT245/75 R-16 144	245/70 R-17 128
215/60 R-15 85	255/70 R-16 123	LT245/70 R-17 165
215/65 R-15 81	265/70 R-16 125	265/65 R-17 143
215/70 R-15 78	265/75 R-16 119	265/70 R-17 129
205/55 R-16 90	LT265/75 R-16 151	LT265/70 R-17 168
205/60 R-16 83	205/50 R-17 114	LT285/70 R-17 194

Vanco WinterContact

205/65 R-15 $98

Vanco Winter

LT185/0 R-14 $75	LT205/65 R-16 $135
205/65 R-15 110	LT215/65 R-16 137

Goodyear

Ultra Grip SUV

265/70 R-16 $108	255/60 R-17 $102	255/55 R-19 $212
235/55 R-17 150	255/65 R-17 114	
235/65 R-17 112	265/65 R-17 121	

Full pattern studding
Available for $15 per tire on tires marked studdable.

SPECIALS

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Pricing Effective October 1-31, 2009
Prices Subject to Change

www.tirerack.com

Ask about our Tire Road Hazard Service Program



Nationwide 1 and 2 day ground service from our 6 warehouses.

Why Should You Consider a Winter Tire & Wheel Package?

Tire Rack's Winter Tire & Wheel Packages make changing to winter tires easy and efficient.

With winter tires mounted on wheels purchased just for those tires, you can install a seasonal package yourself. When the weather changes, you're ready. When the seasons change again, your summer package goes back on just as efficiently.



Benefits of Buying a Package

- High quality, vehicle-specific, exact fitments
- Package arrives ready to bolt on your vehicle
- Switch seasonal packages at your convenience

Package Includes

- 4 tires and 4 wheels, mounted and balanced
- Free scratchless mounting
- Free Hunter Road Force™ balancing
- All necessary hardware at no extra cost!

Sample Tire & Wheel Packages



'09 Ford Mustang GT Coupe
17x7.5 Sport Edition A7
235/55-17 Bridgestone Blizzak LM-60
Total Package Price: $1,092
Optional Set of TPMS Sensors: $284



'10 Honda Civic Coupe EX
15x6.5 Elbrus I05
195/65-15 Pirelli Winter 190 Snowcontrol Serie II
Total Package Price: $672
Optional Set of TPMS Sensors: $140



'10 Toyota Camry SE
16x7 Sport Edition F7
205/65-16 Bridgestone Blizzak WS60
Total Package Price: $720
Optional Set of TPMS Sensors: $352



'09 Audi A4 3.2 Sedan Quattro
17x8 MSW Type 15
225/50-17 Dunlop SP Winter Sport 3D
Total Package Price: $1,056
Optional Set of TPMS Sensors: $188





'09 Subaru Outback Wagon 2.5I
16x6.5 New Steel Wheels w/Covers
215/60-16 Bridgestone Blizzak WS60
Total Package Price: $644
Optional Set of TPMS Sensors: $124



'09 Dodge Ram 1500 SLT 4wd Extended Cab
17x8 Sport Edition TK1
265/70-17 Bridgestone Blizzak DM-V1
Total Package Price: $1,072
Optional Set of TPMS Sensors: $128

Build Your Own at tirerack.com



Visit *tirerack.com/snow* and select your vehicle. Pick our Preferred Package or choose a tire size for your Winter Tire & Wheel Package from the options shown under "Build Your Own Package." Pick a tire, then choose a wheel to complete the package.

What About TPMS?

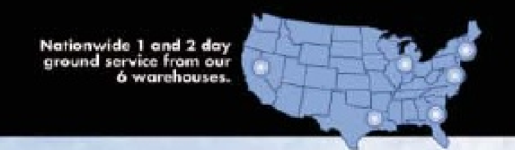


If your vehicle came equipped with a direct tire pressure monitoring system, we can recommend wheels that are compatible with its sensors. An extra set of sensors is also available for most systems, and can arrive **pre-installed on your package!**

Hours: EST M-F 8am-8pm SAT 9am-4pm **1-888-372-8473** Pricing Effective October 1-31, 2009 *Prices Subject to Change* **www.tirerack.com**

Ask about our Tire Road Hazard Service Program









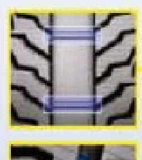
X-ICE® Xi2

Studless Ice and Snow

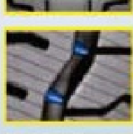
For coupes, sedans and family vans

Developed to combine predictable dry and wet road handling with enhanced snow and ice traction. Michelin FleX-Ice silica-based winter tread rubber compound offers firmness at higher ambient temperatures for wet and dry road stability while it remains flexible at lower temperatures for snow and ice traction. V-Shape Directional Tread Pattern promotes water and slush evacuation.

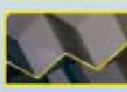
Step Groove
Caterpillar effect enhances deep snow traction



Supporting Knobs
Lateral support improves handling and wear



Cross Z Sipes II
Blends snow traction and high-speed stability







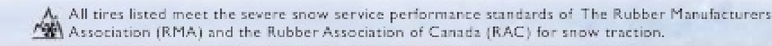
Pilot® Alpin® PA3™

Performance Winter

For sports cars, sporty coupes and performance sedans

Developed to increase wintertime driving confidence, the MICHELIN® Pilot Alpin PA3 tire enhances traction and handling during cold weather driving on dry, wet and snow-covered roads to help deliver the power and precision expected from a high performance automobile equipped with low profile sizes.

Many winter tires have limited availability. Call now for best selection.


All tires listed meet the severe snow service performance standards of The Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) and the Rubber Association of Canada (RAC) for snow traction.

Buy now and get $70*

Buy any set of four new MICHELIN® brand passenger or light truck tires between October 1 and November 15, 2009, and get $70 after mail-in rebate!



* Visit www.tirerack.com/specials or see redemption form for complete offer details. Tires must be purchased from in-stock inventory between 10/1/2009 and 11/15/2009. Void where prohibited.

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Durability

Patented Tri-Extruded Material Offers Rugged Durability and Excellent Grip

Function

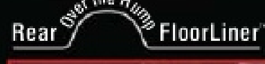
Deep, Sculpted Channels and Reservoir Keep Fluids and Debris in the Liner and Off Your Carpets!

Safety

Factory Retention Anchors Used (where applicable)

Fit

Precision Digital Laser Measurement Ensures a Precise Fit





Available in 3 Colors



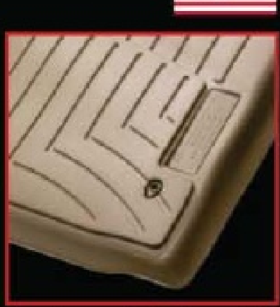
Custom Rear Liners



Textured Surface



Raised Lip



Contoured Underside

WeatherTech®

Acura Cargo Liner Shown

Function

Contoured Design and Textured Finish

Fit

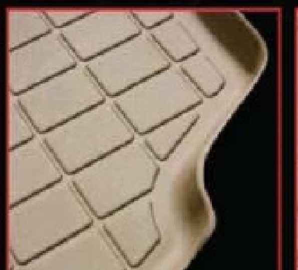
Precision Digital Laser Measurement Ensures a Precise Fit and Complete Coverage

Protection

Raised Lip Keeps Dirt and Fluids Off Your Interior; Protecting Your Vehicle from Wear and Tear

Durability

Advanced Material Resists Chemicals and Remains Flexible Regardless of Temperature



Custom Designed



Textured Finish

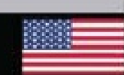


Raised Lip; Contoured Fit

Accessories available for:

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NISSAN
ZERO EM



IS NISSAN'S ALL-NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE THE SEED OF A ZERO-EMISSION REVOLUTION?

● words edward loh

FORD, HONDA, AND TOYOTA have tied their fortunes to gas-electric hybrids. BMW, Mercedes-Benz, and VW have been pushing clean diesels for years. Next year, General Motors is going all out on plug-in hybrids. Where is Nissan, Japan's number-three automaker, on the clean, green, alternative-fuel front?

Quietly preparing the Leaf—what could be the most significant vehicle of the century. With plans for a limited, worldwide launch in 2010, Nissan claims the Leaf will be the first affordable, mass-market electric vehicle. For roughly $25,000, Nissan says the Leaf will provide 100 miles of all-electric, zero-emissions driving, which, it claims, covers the needs of 90 percent of the world's drivers. This is a bold assertion, but one Nissan hopes will help secure its status as the world leader in zero-emissions motoring.

How does it work? The Leaf uses a battery and electric-motor powertrain on a modified front-drive, C-segment, hatchback platform. Advances lie primarily in battery packaging and technology as the Leaf runs on a large battery pack composed of 192 lithium-ion cells. These are not typical cylindrical batteries, but flat, laminated cells developed in conjunction with Japanese consumer electronics maker NEC. According to



TO COMBAT wind noise, the headlamps and side mirrors direct airflow around the sides of the car.

Nissan, the key advantages of these flat cells include reduced complexity, better cooling, and superior packaging. The battery pack lies under the floor and between the wheels in a position Nissan says optimizes vehicle handling and interior room. A fully charged pack delivers enough power to support the 80kW (107-horsepower, 207 pound-foot) AC electric motor for roughly 100 miles of driving. Recharging at home or work is possible in 16 hours on 110V current and in eight hours on 220V. For quick charging, a special higher-voltage charger promises to return 80-percent battery capacity in about 30 minutes.

At first glance, the Leaf doesn't look particularly green. Absent is the one-motion, Kamm-back profile of the Toyota Prius and its doppelganger, the Honda Insight. The Leaf looks more familiar and traditionally Japanese. It should; its exterior and interior styling are the result of Nissan's Japanese design studios. While we see a bit of Honda Fit in the shape of the front end, the overall shape and greenhouse of the car, from the fast angle of the windshield to the kink of the C-pillar, recalls Nissan's Murano SUV with a touch of Versa.

What's up with those headlights? "When driving 75 mph, you can hear only the tires and wind, as there is no engine noise. If you have lots of wind noise, it sounds even greater," says Shiro Nakamura, Nissan's chief creative officer. To combat this, his team developed those oddly bulging headlamps to direct airflow around the sides of the car and paid special attention to the shape and orientation of the side mirrors. At the nose is another EV-specific feature: Under the Nissan logo is a door that flips up to reveal the standard and quick-charging ports.

The Leaf has a lot of this kind of high technology built in, from the optional roof-mounted solar panel (said to help power accessory fans) to a center stack dominated by a large, bright multi-information touchscreen. This controls Nissan's EV-IT system, which provides range, recharging, and navigation information. A futuristic-looking semispherical transmission controller rests on the center console. Honda styling cues resurface in the split instrument panel: A lower housing features another large, bright display, while a secondary hood above shows speed and other EV-specific information.

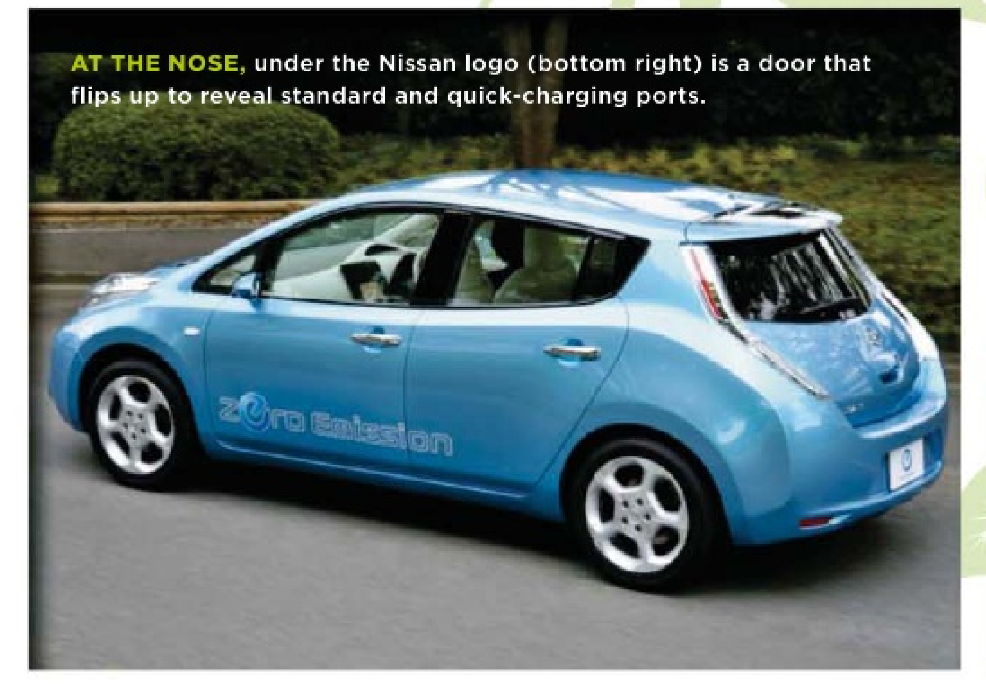
If the Leaf is so high tech on the inside, why is it so plain on the outside? Nakamura explains: "There is a perception in some markets that EVs are toys or cheap. That, like a golf cart or city car, they are not a real car. We didn't want to create a car that's toylike or cheap-looking. Ours is a real car. It can go 87 mph and can seat four to five."

We haven't been able to verify either claim, as our drives have been limited









AT THE NOSE, under the Nissan logo (bottom right) is a door that flips up to reveal standard and quick-charging ports.





to EV development mules based on the Nissan Cube and Versa. If the Leaf performs anything like those two, you can expect brisk but quiet acceleration and eerie smoothness from the single speed transmission and absence of combusting fuel.

At first, Leafs will be sold (with leased battery packs) only in predetermined markets that have or are now building charging stations to support their use. U.S. cities include Portland, Oregon, San Diego, California, Seattle, Washington, Phoenix/Tucson, Arizona, and parts of Tennessee near Nissan's headquarters.

While there are significant questions as to whether there will be enough EV infrastructure to support the Leaf when it goes on widespread rollout in 2012, it looks like Nissan will be able to make a sizeable push into this new market. Capacity at Nissan's Oppama, Japan plant is 30,000 vehicles a year, but when battery and vehicle production come online in Smyrna, Tennessee, capacity will grow by another 150,000 units a year.

So is there a healthy green future for the Leaf or will it wither away as other manufacturers' EV attempts have in the past? That will depend on how well Nissan educates potential buyers and stimulates EV infrastructure construction, but so far, the Leaf looks green and green means go. ■

ELECTRIC COMPANY



NISSAN, MITSUBISHI, AND SUBARU parent company Fuji Heavy Industries are working together to build a grid of charging stations in Japan for EVs. Nissan's interest obviously makes sense, but so does the others'. Subaru's Stella plug-in EV went on sale in Japan earlier this year as did Mitsubishi's i-MiEV electric vehicle. Like the Leaf, the i-MiEV is also coming to the U.S. The i-MiEV (i is the minicar this model is based on; the rest stands for Mitsubishi innovative electric vehicle) is powered by a battery composed of 88 lithium-ion cells connected in series and also uses a permanent magnet synchronous electric motor and a single-speed reduction gear transmission. An on-board charger allows you to charge the battery with 100V/200V AC, taking seven to 14 hours for a full charge. There's also a quick-charge option similar to Nissan's: 30 minutes yielding 80 percent of full charge. Range is as much as 99 miles on a single charge, but with varying congestion, weather, and driving style, that number will be lower. There is room for four inside, but don't be surprised if this car isn't chock full of creature comforts beyond air conditioning and a driver display that shows power consumption, remaining range, and energy recovery. Mitsubishi has yet to announce when the i-MiEV will go on sale in America or how much it will cost. ■ **allyson harwood**

2010 NISSAN LEAF

BASE PRICE	$27,500 (est)
VEHICLE LAYOUT	Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door hatchback
MOTOR	107-hp/207-lb-ft AC electric
TRANSMISSION	1-speed auto
CURB WEIGHT	3400 lb (mfr)
WHEELBASE	106.3 in
LENGTH x WIDTH x HEIGHT	175.0 x 69.7 x 61.0 in
0-60 MPH	10.0 sec (MT est)
EPA CITY/HWY FUEL ECON	350 mpg (est)
CO2 EMISSIONS	0.0 lb/mile
ON SALE IN U.S.	Fall 2010



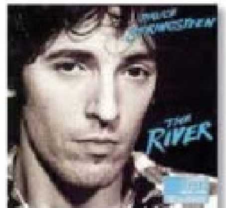
six decades of pop culture & the automobile

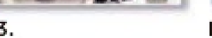
AUTOMOBILES ARE AN ELEMENTAL INSTRUMENT IN THE SOUNDTRACK OF OUR LIVES. WE DRIVE THEM FAST, SLOW, AND FROM POINT A TO POINT B. THEY REPRESENT WHO WE ARE, OR WHO WE'D LIKE TO BE, AND SYMBOLIZE THE INTERACTION BETWEEN SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY. WE RACE, WRECK, AND RESTORE THEM. CARS STAR IN MOVIES AND TELEVISION, IN BOOKS, AND ON-LINE. SOME REPRESENT GREAT DESIGN AND ARE OFTEN WORKS OF ART. AUTOMOBILES ARE FAR MORE THAN TRANSPORTATION: THEY'VE BECOME EMBEDDED IN POPULAR CULTURE. IT'S ALL THIS WE CELEBRATE HERE, AS MOTOR TREND'S 60TH-ANNIVERSARY PARTY CONTINUES.

• words **angus mackenzie/art st. antoine/matt stone**

CARS AND GUITARS

You could say rock 'n' roll started with a song about a car, Ike Turner's "Rocket 88," a 1950 homage to the latent sex appeal of Oldsmobile's seminal musclecar. Like the man said, they don't write songs about refrigerators. Here, in no particular order, are just a few of the car-culture tracks from the past 60 years—the good, the bad, and the obscure.

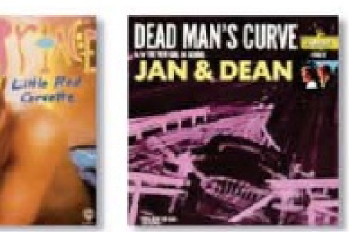




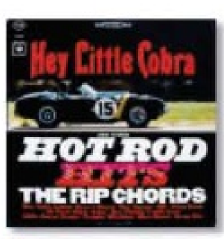
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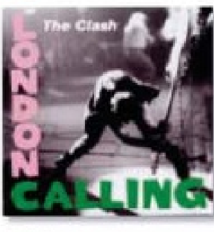
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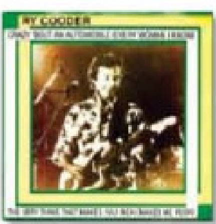
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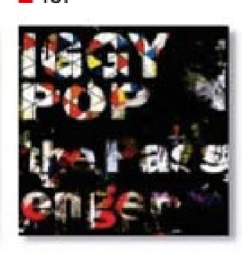


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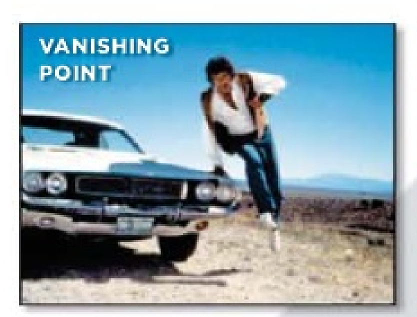
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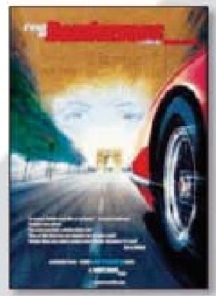


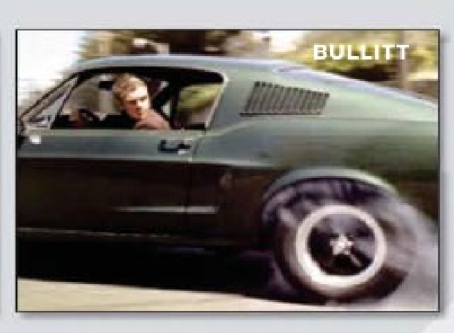
■ 30.

- ■ 1. "Little Deuce Coupe" *The Beach Boys*
- ■ 2. "Drive My Car" *The Beatles*
- ■ 3. "Ramrod" *Bruce Springsteen*
- ■ 4. "Little Red Corvette" *Prince*
- ■ 5. "Hot Rod Lincoln" *Charlie Ryan*
- ■ 6. "Dead Man's Curve" *Jan and Dean*
- ■ 7. "Hey Little Cobra" *The Rip Chords*
- ■ 8. "Jeepster" *T. Rex*
- ■ 9. "Mercedes-Benz" *Janis Joplin*
- ■ 10. "Jump in My Car" *Ted Mulry Gang*
- ■ 11. "I Can't Drive 55" *Sammy Haggar*
- ■ 12. "Highway Star" *Deep Purple*
- ■ 13. "Radar Love" *Golden Earring*
- ■ 14. "Paradise By the Dashboard Lights" *Meat Loaf*
- ■ 15. "Fuel" *Metallica*
- ■ 16. "Always Crashing in the Same Car" *David Bowie*
- ■ 17. "The Race" *Yello*
- ■ 18. "2-4-6-8 Motorway" *Tom Robinson Band*
- ■ 19. "Brand New Cadillac" *The Clash*
- ■ 20. "Chevrolet" *ZZ Top*
- ■ 21. "Crazy 'Bout an Automobile" *Ry Cooder*
- ■ 22. "Elvis' Rolls-Royce" *Was, Not Was*
- ■ 23. "Stickshifts and Safety Belts" *Cake*
- ■ 24. "Fast Car" *Tracey Chapman*
- ■ 25. "Jesus Built My Hot Rod" *Ministry*
- ■ 26. "My Hooptie" *Sir Mix-A-Lot*
- ■ 27. "Mercury Blues" *Alan Jackson*
- ■ 28. "The Passenger" *Iggy Pop*
- ■ 29. "Wouldn't you Like to Ride" *Malik Usef*
- ■ 30. "Travelling Without Moving" *Jamiroquai*









MOVIE-STAR CARS

Dreadful as the silver screen can be at times—skyscraper closeups of Brad Pitt, subtlety-free directing by Michael Bay, the occasional "intelligent" English frilly-frocks-and-horse-carriages drama—at other times, nothing beats a Hollywood motion picture. Curious that all those times seem to be when the movie in question features a car front and center. Here, in no particular order, are a few of our favorites.

THE ITALIAN JOB (1969)

If you think the stars are Marky Mark and Charlize Theron, you're banished to cleaning the lint from Rush Limbaugh's navel. We're talking about the original "Job" here—the one with Michael Caine, Benny Hill, and a wild chase in which '60s Minis rocket from sewer tunnels to rooftops.

DEATH RACE 2000 (1975) The writer of the movie-poster tagline deserves the Nobel Prize for Literature: "In the Year 2000, Hit and Run Driving Is No Longer a Felony. It's the National Sport!"

RONIN (1998) We don't understand the plot, either. But who cares when you've got DeNiro and the yummy Natascha McElhone hurling BMWs, Benzes, and Audis through Paris and the south of France at Grand Prix speeds? Director John Frankenheimer hired F1 pilots to tackle the chases—which put the famed "Bullitt" scene on a trailer.

BULLITT (1968)

Okay, we just slammed "Bullitt" (above). But McQueen's Mustang versus Charger flog through San Francisco is just too damn iconic to leave off a list of movie-star cars. For a lesson in moviemaking continuity, count the number of times the chase cars pass the downhill VW Bug.

RENDEZVOUS (1976)

Director Claude Lelouch's illegal dash through Paris used to be viewable only in select dungeons and the fortified panic rooms of illegal casinos. Now you can watch it on YouTube. Never mind the haters—it's not a Ferrari, the engine sound is fake, it wasn't an F1 ace but Lelouch himself driving. "Rendezvous" is a must-see.

VANISHING POINT (1971) Many fans of this cult hit focus on Kowalski's hopped-up, pistol-shifter Dodge Challenger R/T—and the countless scenes in which the pair outrun the cops. We, on the other hand, prefer to ponder the deep meaning of man and machine traversing the bleached canvas of the Old West, the pathos of one's quest to find tru—*...ouch!*

GRAND PRIX (1966)

Before Stallone wrote his emetic car-race "film" (2001's "Driven"), he should've watched Frankenheimer's brilliant Formula 1 opera at least once. No, 10,000 times.

GONE IN 60 SECONDS (1974) Again, if you think we're referring to yet another travesty of a remake, please exit the airliner now. Writer/director/star H.B. Halicki's original, a full-length car chase, was a true labor of love—and remains the "Citizen Kane" of smash-up flicks.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION (1971)

Combine "Exorcist" director William Friedkin, Oscar-winner Gene Hackman, a 1971 Pontiac LeMans, and an escaping hit man in a Brooklyn elevated train, and you have car chase as art.

SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT (1977) Still snubbed by the American Film Institute (oh, fine, put "Lawrence of Arabia" in the Top 100 Films instead), this Burt Reynolds smash ensured that the screaming-chicken hood decal would mean to the '70s what the alligator polo shirt would mean to the '80s.

MAD MAX (1979)

Arguably, Mel Gibson's finest-ever film (you do an engagingly bizarre, cannibalized-cars Aussie Western, and *then* you do "Braveheart"? Curious career path, Mel). Bet you didn't know: Only Gibson is wearing real leather in the movie. Due to the miniscule budget, all the other cops are clad in vinyl.

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS (2001) Imagine "West Side Story" without the singing, L.A. instead of New York, and tuner cars instead of jackknives. The hair gel is about the same.

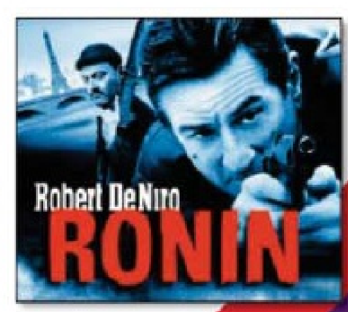
THE F.J. HOLDEN (1977)

The fact that both this car flick and our editor-in-chief are Australian has *nothing* to do with it being on this list. When we asked him if the movie essentially represents a Down Under "American Graffiti," our ed replied: "It's got a 2.2-liter six and a three-speed manual column shiftah. Fair dinkum, mate." Uh, that probably doesn't work in U.S. DVD players...



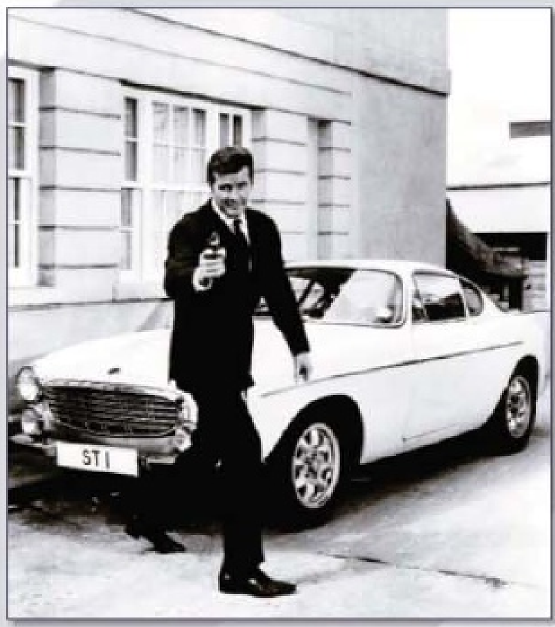








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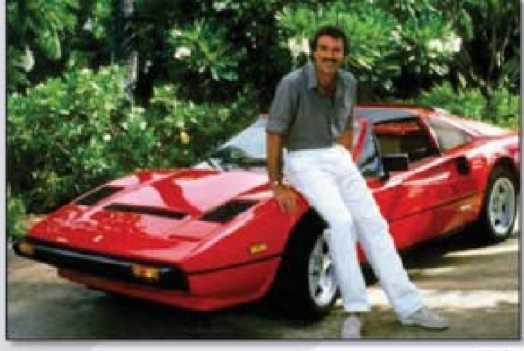


■ 3.

TOPS ON THE TUBE

Television has provided its share of automotive classic artistry. Here are 11 favorites (we couldn't stop at 10).

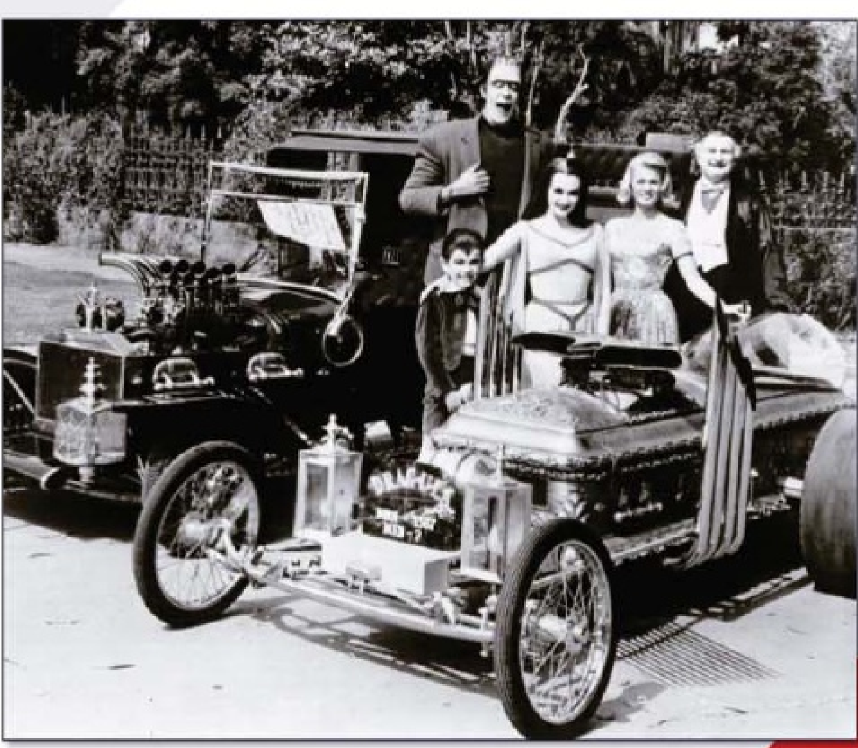
- ■ 1. **THE BATMOBILE** *("Batman" 1965-68). Still can't top Barris' original.*
- ■ 2. **BLACK BEAUTY** *("The Green Hornet" 1966-67). Stole scenes nearly as well as Bruce Lee.*
- ■ 3. **VOLVO P1800** *("The Saint" 1962-1969). Yep, Roger Moore made a Volvo cool.*
- ■ 4. **THE MONKEEMOBILE** *("The Monkees" 1966-68). Designer Dean Jeffries' Mona Lisa.*
- ■ 5. **THE GENERAL LEE** *("The Dukes of Hazzard" 1979-1985). Confederate flag-plastered Charger got almost as much attention as Daisy Duke. Almost.*
- ■ 6. **MUNSTERMOBILES** *("The Munsters" 1964-66). Two more George Barris gems: the Munster Koach and the Drag-U-La.*
- ■ 7. **KITT** *("Knight Rider" 1982-86). The Trans Am that outsmarted Hasselhoff. Easily.*
- ■ 8. **FERRARI 308GTS** *("Magnum, P.I." 1980-88). Thanks to this* bella *roadster, guys enjoyed watching Magnum too.*
- ■ 9. **SUNBEAM TIGER** *("Get Smart" 1965-69). Put a tank in your Tiger.*
- ■ 10. **PEUGEOT 403 CABRIOLET** *("Columbo" 1968-2003). Well...James Bond he isn't.*
- ■ 11. **FERRARI CALIFORNIA** *("Entourage" 2004-present). When the fictional Vinnie wanted to gift Turtle with L.A.'s hottest car, the real-life Scuderia was only too happy to oblige.*



■ 8.



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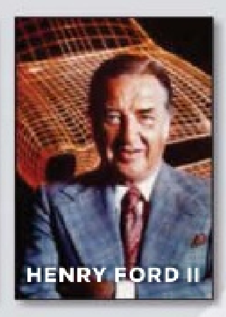


■ 6.




ENZO FERRARI


AUDI QUATTRO


HENRY FORD II

AUTOMOTIVE EVENTS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

The auto industry is still the world's largest single industry. It's still mostly run by accountants and engineers—folks who understand the business in terms of system and process and metrics—even though its products sell largely on fluffy intangibles such as emotion and image and desire. Not surprisingly, then, there have been some remarkable turning points that have changed the world beyond the realms of the mere enthusiast.

1947: ENZO FERRARI LAUNCHES HIS FIRST CAR

For Ferrari, his road-car business was always about supporting his true passion—racing. The 125 S looked like a roadgoing sports car, but it was designed to win races, which it did, taking 1st place in its first race, the 1947 Grand Prix of Rome. The core DNA that has since helped make tiny Ferrari one of the world's most valuable brands dates from right here.

1950: W. EDWARDS DEMING LECTURES THE JAPANESE UNION OF SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS

Iowa-born Deming understood the importance of statistical process control, and its impact on product quality, but American manufacturers weren't interested. The Japanese paid attention, though, and Deming's ideas underpinned the Japanese auto industry's relentless rise during the postwar period. Toyota, Honda, Nissan—all owe their success to the sage America ignored.

1962: HENRY FORD II DIVORCES FIRST WIFE

Four names appeared on the shortlist at a 1962 product strategy meeting to discuss a new Ford: Monte Carlo, Monaco, Torino, Cougar. GM and Chrysler owned the first two. The design team had called their car Cougar from the beginning, and Ford boss Lee Iacocca preferred Torino. When news leaked of Henry II's two year affair with Italian divorcee Cristina Vettore Austin, Torino was out. The car became the Mustang instead.

1965: "UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED" IS PUBLISHED

Activist lawyer Ralph Nader's book was more than just a shot at GM's Chevy Corvair: Nader detailed how all Detroit automakers were reluctant to spend money on safety features, which was perhaps understandable given consumers had proven largely unwilling to pay for them. GM's inept attempts to discredit Nader backfired and perhaps unwittingly led to greater government regulation of the auto industry.

1980: AUDI QUATTRO APPEARS AS A COURSE CAR ON THE ALGARVE RALLY

Finnish driver Hannu Mikkola drove the all-new, all-wheel-drive Quattro as an official course car on this Portuguese event. Stunned observers noted that had he been a competitor, he would've won by nine minutes. With its all-wheel-drive traction, the Quattro dominated the 1981 World Rally Championship, and set the traction template for rally cars—and many high-performance road cars—that exists to this day

1989: LEXUS LS 400 AND ACURA NSX LAUNCH

These were two very different cars from two very different car companies, but each absolutely stunned the world's auto industry. The smooth, silent, beautifully built LS 400 sent imperious Mercedes S-Class engineers scuttling back to the drawing board, while the NSX proved Ferraris need not be fragile and temperamental. Both cars changed luxury sedans and supercars forever—and proved Japan had arrived at the very top.

1990: FORD BUYS JAGUAR

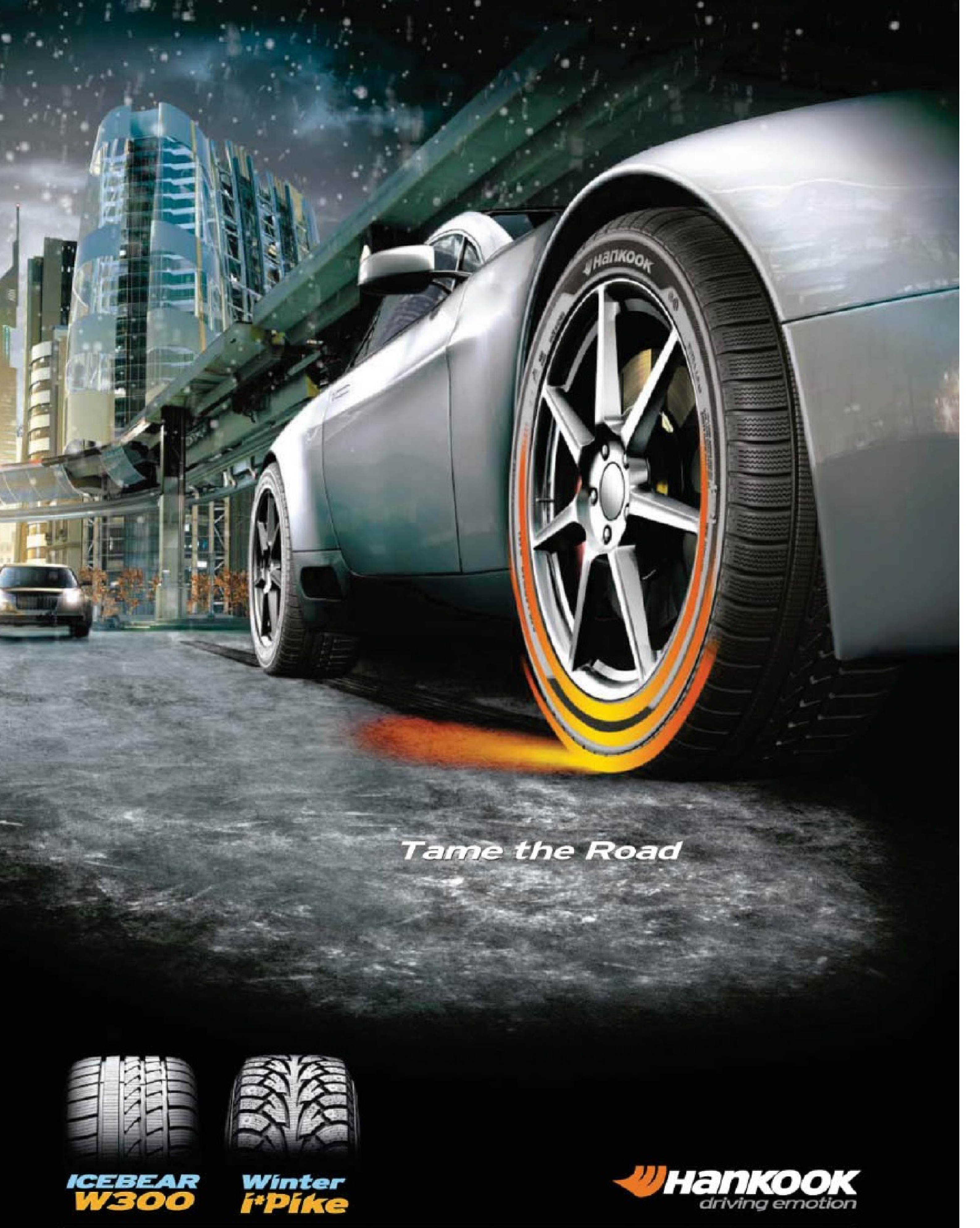
Jaguar was a disaster for Ford. It paid way too much, and never found a way to make the storied British marque pay its way, but without Ford Jaguar would have almost certainly perished, and the move paved the way for other mainstream automakers to acquire luxury brands. The results have been mixed: GM and Saab never worked, but VW Group's stewardship of Bentley and Lamborghini has been exemplary.

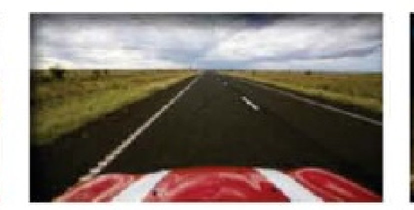
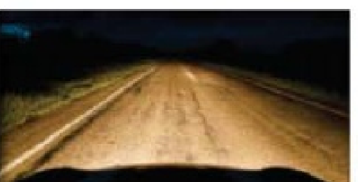
2009: DETROIT, AS WE KNOW IT, CEASES TO EXIST

King-hit by the collapsing economy, and their requests for bridging loans rebuffed by Washington, GM and Chrysler announced prepackaged bankruptcies in 2009, and both emerged with—shock!—the government as the majority shareholder. It's too early to tell what the outcome will be, but this much is certain: The Detroit once defined by wealthy, insular, patrician, arrogant auto companies is gone. Forever. ■


LEXUS LS 400


JAGUAR XJ


Hankook
Tame the Road
ICEBEAR
W300
Winter
i*Pike
Hankook
driving emotion

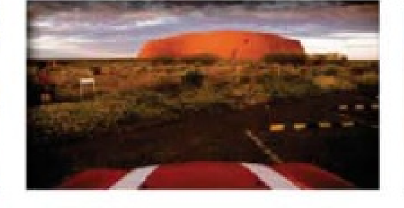



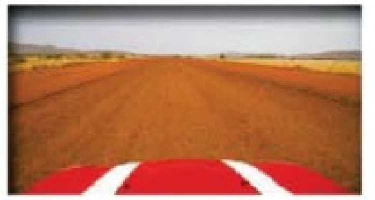


terror australis

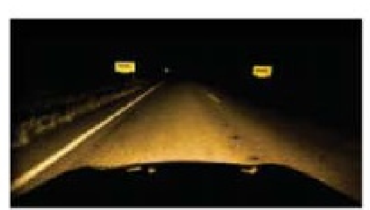
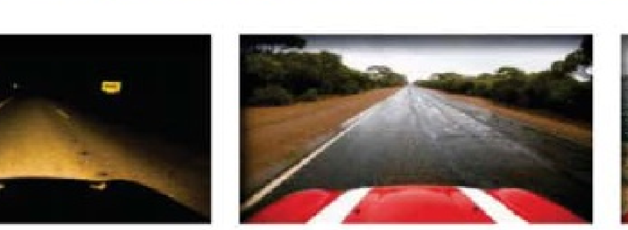
THREE ADVENTURERS REPLICATE AN HISTORIC CROSSING DOWN UNDER IN ANOTHER MINI

● words **gavin green** ● photographs **mark bramley**









The combination of light weight, wide tires, and high entry speed meant the little Mini kept surfing over the sand. Cook, following in the X3, reckoned it looked like a little radio-controlled toy car skipping over a beach.

We swept past a deserted SUV stuck in the sand, then, soon after, on the other side of the road, a stricken road train (150-foot-long, 150-ton truck). About 20 miles later—or just under 30 minutes of intense driving—the sand thinned and a solid gravel surface gave the car's tires solid purchase.

DETAILS

GAVIN GREEN'S DRIVING DISTANCE was 4130 miles—the equivalent of driving from New York to Los Angeles and halfway back again.

AUSTRALIA'S LAND AREA is 2,967,908 square miles, slightly smaller than the USA minus Alaska and Hawaii.

AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION density is seven people per square mile, compared with the USA's (including Alaska) 86. Canada's is nine. Apart from Mongolia, it is the least densely populated country on earth.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA, the state that makes up the western third of the country, has a population density of 2.2 people per square mile (and three-quarters of them live in one city, Perth). Take away Perth, and Western Australia has half the population density of Alaska.

NOT CONTENT with "just" an east-west crossing in his Mini back in 1965, Evan Green (Gavin's dad) then proceeded to do a north-south crossing of Australia as well. His total mileage for the "figure of 8" journey was 12,000.

EVAN GREEN'S TRIP wasn't merely the first east-west crossing of Australia through the center by car. It was the first east-west crossing, through the middle, by land, by any form of transport. A special Great Explorers map was produced to commemorate the trip.

TRAVEL THROUGH much of outback Western Australia requires Aboriginal permits, issued mostly by the native tribes (Gavin Green needed two separate permits for his journey).

THERE IS SUCH A PROBLEM with gasoline sniffing, among the indigenous Aboriginal communities, that normal unleaded fuel is banned in much of the Western Australian outback. Instead, cars must run on something called Opal fuel, an aroma-free gasoline developed by BP.

THE MAIN DIRECT ROUTE from Sydney to Perth, which runs mostly along the south coast, is sealed the whole way. Total journey distance is about 2500 miles. The only other sealed road, from the east to west coasts, goes far to the north and is about 4500 miles.

EVAN GREEN WROTE A BOOK of his trip—"Journeys with Gelignite Jack"—and a film was also made called "Crossroads Alice."

SIX OF THE 10 DEADLIEST SNAKES in the world live in Australia.

THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 40 MILLION kangaroos—double the number of people who live in Australia. But a lot fewer than the total number of sheep (140 million).

So we crossed the Northern Territory/Western Australian border, just as rain started pelting our windscreen. That night, we camped near the small settlement of Warakurna, almost a third of the way across the dirt road—the Great Central Road—that cuts through central Western Australia. It rained hard. Not the sort of camping we'd expected in an Australian desert. A storm destroyed our temporary roof, made of a groundsheet tethered to the BMW and some small mallee trees.

Next morning, the sky was a deep blue and the light was achingly bright. The road was well graded and smooth and wide for much of the way. Occasionally the iron-rich red soil of the road was replaced by white-gray limestone. Rocky patches caused us to slow, and I frequently feared for the tires. The rocks and stones attacked the belly of the car like a fusillade of machine-gun fire.

We saw another car—invariably a big SUV—every three hours or so. Of the many attractions of the outback, surely the greatest is its emptiness. In an overcrowded world, there is nothing more appealing than space. Occasionally, we'd pull over to the roadside, cut the engine, and simply enjoy the quiet and solitude. Sometimes, road trains coming the other way forced us to pull off the road and give the giant vehicles, which weighed 100 times as much as our Mini, as much space as possible. We saw herds of feral camels, descendants of the beasts imported to help build the telegraph lines and railways over 100 years ago. Every time we stopped, flies attached us. The dreaded insects may not be the most dangerous creatures in the outback, but they are the most annoying.

The stars, astonishingly vivid in that ink-black sky, entertained us, as we drifted off to sleep. Next morning, two emus wandered into our campsite and tried to steal our breakfast. These indigenous ostrich-like birds are as tall as men, and their big claws and sharp beaks are specially menacing.

As we prepared to leave, with the sun just starting to paint the sky a bright azure blue, a truck driver told us the road ahead was muddy and storms were expected. We headed off, seeking to average 50-60 mph. Occasionally, the deep corrugations made such speeds impossible, but normally the Mini skipped over the bumps like a surfboard skimming the waves. Soon after, the sky darkened to the color of coal and rain fell, hard. River crossings, usually bone dry, gushed with muddy water. Nearing Laverton, where the sealed road to Perth began, the road was impassable because of a deep flowing creek. A simple yet rough diversion routed us around the water and back onto the main track. Finally, we reached Laverton, and the smooth hum of tarmac under-tire replaced the thump of rocky gravel and the swoosh of sand.

On the final run on good roads to Perth via the gold-mining town of Kalgoorlie, we had more heavy rain. We crossed the hills that form Perth's eastern border, and below us, twinkling prosperously, was the capital of Australia's mineral-rich west. It was 6.50 p.m. on day 10 of our crossing.

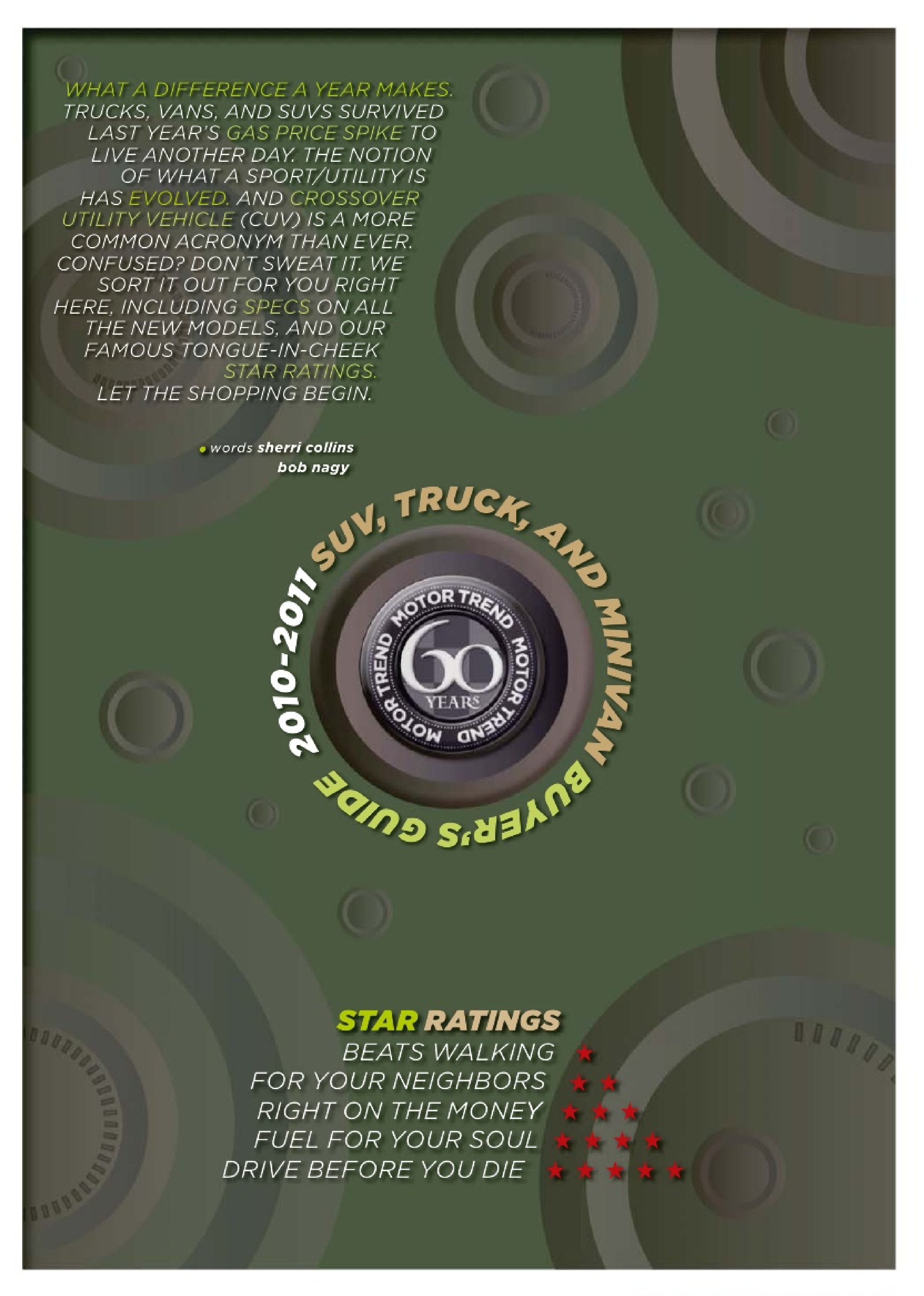
So our journey ended. We had covered 4130 miles, had no punctures, were never stuck, and the car had suffered no mechanical problem apart from a rattling hatch, a dashboard squeak, and a brake warning light illuminated on the fascia (dust had affected a sensor, reckoned engineer Cook).

We put the car on a hoist and inspected its belly. The sumpguard was battle-scarred but unbroken. The standard plastic shroud that protects the fuel tank was ripped, but the plastic tank itself was intact.

Unlike my dad, 44 years before, we had achieved nothing of historical importance. Except that, in all likelihood, we had completed the second-ever crossing of Australia through the center by Mini. ■

MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF OUR ROUTE WOULD BE ON PROPER ROADS. BUT THAT STILL LEFT MORE THAN 1000 MILES OF GRAVEL, DIRT, DEEP SAND, ROCKS, AND RUTS.

ULURU, Ayers Rock (above), in the center of Australia, is the world's biggest rock. Destination reached: capital city of Perth lies beneath frothy clouds.


WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES. TRUCKS, VANS, AND SUVS SURVIVED LAST YEAR'S GAS PRICE SPIKE TO LIVE ANOTHER DAY. THE NOTION OF WHAT A SPORT/UTILITY IS HAS EVOLVED. AND CROSSOVER UTILITY VEHICLE (CUV) IS A MORE COMMON ACRONYM THAN EVER. CONFUSED? DON'T SWEAT IT. WE SORT IT OUT FOR YOU RIGHT HERE, INCLUDING SPECS ON ALL THE NEW MODELS, AND OUR FAMOUS TONGUE-IN-CHEEK STAR RATINGS. LET THE SHOPPING BEGIN.
words sherri collins
bob nagy
2010-2011 SUV, TRUCK, AND MINIVAN BUYER'S GUIDE
MOTOR TREND
60 YEARS
STAR RATINGS
BEATS WALKING ★
FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS ★★
RIGHT ON THE MONEY ★★★
FUEL FOR YOUR SOUL ★★★★
DRIVE BEFORE YOU DIE ★★★★★



Acura MDX

BASE PRICE: $42,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The MDX is the last vehicle in Acura's lineup to get the new edgier corporate look—the beaklike grille, sport-styled exhaust tips, sharper lines. Big news is the seven-seater now boasts a 6-sp Sequential SportShift gearbox and a retuned V-6 for improved mileage. Interior has more leather and tech features, such as the blind-spot info system.

COOL FACT: High-end 410-watt, 10-speaker stereo system includes a 15GB hard drive for storing music and movies onboard.

SUM UP: MADE OVER AND MADE BETTER. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.7L/300-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.6 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	5000/1259 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16/21 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Acura RDX

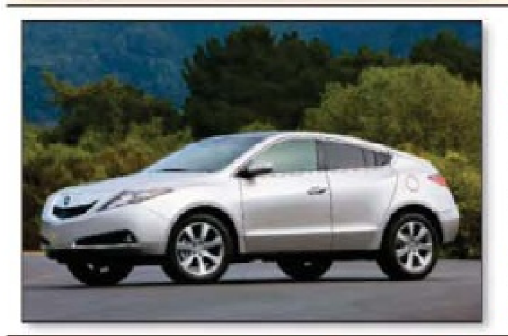
BASE PRICE RANGE: $33,330-$35,330 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: 2010 RDX gets an exterior touch up (wheels, bumper fascias), more interior tech appointments (USB port, electronic compass), and a new FWD option for better fuel economy and a lower price point. Additional content changes include revised braking system components, a rearview camera, and auto-function headlights as standard.

BEST BUY: The new FWD model saves money and gas—and you know you're never going off-roading in it anyway.

SUM UP: THINKS IT'S A SPORTS CAR. ISN'T. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.3L/240-hp turbo DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	6.5 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500/870* lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17/22 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Acura ZDX

BASE PRICE: $44,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: All-new ZDX is Acura's entry into "sport coupe" SUV segment. Sharing exterior design cues from the new TL, the ZDX has a rakish roofline and hidden rear door handles that emphasize the coupe look. 3.7L V-6 is mated to the new 6A found in the MDX. Interior is Acura's most upscale to date, with swathes of leather and loads of high-end gadgetry.

COOL FACT: New 6A and a new multiclutch torque converter combo enhances acceleration in gears 1 to 5 while improving mileage in 6th.

SUM UP: THE FASHIONISTA'S SUV. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.7L/300-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	6.5 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	5000/N/A lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16/21 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Audi Q5

BASE PRICE: $38,175 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Rolling into its second year, the stylish and sporty Q5 receives a few minor changes to its equipment and package offerings, including new 20-in. S line wheels, Fine Grain Ash wood finish, ventilated front seats, and a new luxury package for the Prestige model, which also gains side assist as standard.

COOL FACT: Audi is the first company in the U.S. to sell all its gas engines with direct injection.

SUM UP: A PRICEY EURO HATCH DISGUISED AS AN SUV. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.2L/270-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	6.7 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	4400/N/A lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18/23 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Audi Q7

BASE PRICE RANGE: $44,500-$60,100* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: A refreshed exterior, new wheel designs, and more standard features and options are on the menu for the 2010 Q7. A new grille, head- and taillights, tailgate, and mirrors update the outside, while chrome accents, ventilated seats, the next generation of MMI (3G), and door-panel ambient lighting add improvements to the interior.

COOL FACT: TDI's advanced exhaust emissions control reduces nitrogen oxides by up to 90 percent as compared with older diesel techs.

SUM UP: A PRICEY EURO WAGON DISGUISED AS AN SUV. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.6L/280-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINES	3.0L/225-hp t-diesel DOHC V-6; 4.2L/350-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.3-8.5 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	6600/1279 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-17/18-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



BMW X1 (2011)

BASE PRICE: $34,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Sporting five doors and capable of carrying five people, BMW's fully loaded compact-size SUV will make its U.S. debut in 2011, nearly a year after it goes on sale in Europe, where it will be offered with two drivetrains and four engine configurations—one gas and three diesel. BMW has yet to decide which engines will power the U.S. models.

COOL FACT: A chief aspect of the xDrive system is its ability to reduce understeer by shifting more power to the rear wheels on winding roads.

SUM UP: SLICING THE NICHE ONE MORE TIME. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	3.0L/260-hp DOHC I-6*
OPT ENGINE	2.0L/201-hp t-diesel DOHC I-4*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	6.7-7.2 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	4410/N/A lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	N/A
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

* estimated

BASE ENGINE	3.0L/260-hp DOHC I-6*
OPT ENGINES	3.0L/300-hp DOHC twin-turbo I-6; 3.0L/265-hp DOHC twin t-diesel I-6*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	N/A
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500/1036 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	N/A
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

BMW X3

BASE PRICE: $40,700* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Complete treatment with a less boxy, more sporty look (photo is of current gen), added passenger and cargo room, a more driver-friendly interior, and myriad standard and optional high-end appointments, such as adaptive headlights, night vision, and head-up display.

COOL FACT: The new X3 will be built alongside the X5 and X6 in Spartanburg, N.C., instead of at Magna Steyr in Graz, Austria.

SUM UP: FOLLOWS THE FORMULA. (NOT RATED)



BASE ENGINE	3.0L/260-hp DOHC I-6
OPT ENGINES	3.0L/265-hp twin t-diesel DOHC I-6; 4.4L/555-hp DOHC twin-turbo V-8; 4.4L DOHC twin-turbo V-8 + elec-motors/485-hp comb; 4.8L/350-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	4.5-7.8 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	6000/1202-1345 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12-19/18-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

BMW X5

BASE PRICE RANGE: $48,500-$86,250* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The M. With a slightly lower stance (0.4 inch), adjustable dampers, an M-tuned 6A gearbox, and a newly developed 555-hp twin-turbo V-8, the M model is not just an X5 with new exterior and interior badging. A X5 hybrid using the same setup as on the X6 is expected to follow the hi-po version onto the market later in the year.

COOL FACT: The X5 and X6 are the first M models equipped with run-flat tires and without cross-drilled rotors.

SUM UP: EVEN FASTER—AND MORE EXPENSIVE. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.0L/300-hp twin-turbo DOHC I-6
OPT ENGINES	4.4L/400-hp twin-turbo DOHC V-8; 4.4L twin-turbo DOHC V-8 + elec motors/485-hp comb; 4.4L/555-hp twin-turbo DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	4.5-6.8 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	7500-8200/1025-1190 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12-16/18-24 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

BMW X6

BASE PRICE RANGE: $56,800-$89,750* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: BMW aims to show with its two new 2010 X6 models that power to the max and eco-friendly behavior are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The M-tweaked X6 boasts 555 hp and 500 lb-ft of torque, while the ActiveHybrid version outputs a more modest 485 hp and a 20-percent gain in fuel economy. The existing X6 models are expected to remain relatively unchanged.

COOL FACT: In the SUV world, only the Cayenne Turbo S has more torque.

SUM UP: SMOOTH AND SWIFT...AND SILLY. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.6L/288-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.8-8.1 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	4500/1500-1650 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-17/22-24 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

Buick Enclave

BASE PRICE RANGE: $35,940-$41,105 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Buick's sole SUV rolls into 2010 with minor modifications, such as optional 20-in. chrome-clad wheels, the USB port with premium radios is now located in the center console, and standard OnStar 8.2 safety and security technology includes enhanced emergency, vehicle diagnostics, and navigation capabilities.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: The Enclave CX w/FWD provides plenty of luxuries and gets decent gas mileage for an eight-seater.

SUM UP: THE ENCLAVE NEEDS AN ENCORE. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	6.2L/403-hp OHV V-8
OPT ENGINE	6.0L OHV V-8 + elec motors/332-hp
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 6A/CVT
0-60 MPH	6.4-8.1 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	5600-8300/1435-1610 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12-20/19-21 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

Cadillac Escalade/ESV

BASE PRICE RANGE: $63,300-$88,400* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The Hybrid's 6.0L has a new 3.08 axle ratio for even better fuel economy and its 6.0L V-8 is now FlexFuel compatible. The "base" 6.2L engine gains Active Fuel Management Technology and all models receive a revised inner door design for better side-impact protections and a new locking steering column. The Platinum model clock is also standard.

COOL FACT: The Hybrid's Energy Storage System's internal fan is tuned to be quiet at low vehicle speeds, when occupants could more easily hear it.

SUM UP: CADDYS CAN HUG TREES. REALLY BIG TREES. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	6.2L/403-hp OHV V-8
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.2 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	7500/1210 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12/18 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

Cadillac Escalade EXT

BASE PRICE: $62,900* BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: The Escalade EXT receives the same upgrades as the SUV siblings. Also on the list for 2010 are side thorax airbags on the front outboard seats, a battery-saver mode that shuts off power when the battery gets low due to extended accessory use, a revised parking brake release, and a new exterior color, Silver Lining.

AVOID: If you really need a pickup, buy one; otherwise you're better off with the SUV.

SUM UP: IF YOU MUST SPEND TOO MUCH ON A PICKUP. ★★★



* estimated



Cadillac SRX

BASE PRICE RANGE: $34,155-$49,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Everything. All-new design with two new engine offerings, including a turbo V-6, marks Cadillac's true entry into lux crossover market. Offered in FWD and AWD modes (the turbo is AWD only), SRX's all-new chassis features a real-time damping system. A well-apportioned interior and oodles of safety features round out this impressive package.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: The SRX Turbo's additional oomph makes it the dance partner of choice.

SUM UP: TRIES TO TAKE ON EUROPE'S BEST. FAILS. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.0L/265-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	2.8L/300-hp turbo DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.6-8.6 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	2500-3500/1243 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-18/21-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Chevrolet Avalanche

BASE PRICE RANGE: $36,500-$46,960* BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: A smaller lineup. Chevy's multitrick pony still comes in RWD and 4WD configurations with LS, LT, and LTZ trim levels, but the more powerful 6.0L engine is gone. Other changes include a single-speed transfer case as standard on AWD with a two-speed being optional and an expanded 1LT package offering, among other extras, dual-zone auto climate control.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: LTZ-trimmed AWD model to haul any load with style.

SUM UP: A NOT-AS-BIG GULP. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.3L/310-hp OHV V-8
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD/4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	8.4-8.8 sec
TOW/ PAYLOAD	7900-8100/1320-1350 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14/20 mpg (RWD)
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 4



Chevrolet Colorado

BASE PRICE RANGE: $17,500-$27,410* BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: The Silverado's oft-forgotten sibling rolls into 2010 with only a few, yet significant, changes. The top-end 5.3L V-8 now utilizes variable valve timing and all models receive head curtain side airbags as standard. Three new exterior metallic paints (Cardinal Red, Steel Green, and Sheer Silver) have been added as well.

BEST BUY: A 4WD regular cab with the 3.7L is a perfect workaday truck at a bargain price.

SUM UP: THE FORGOTTEN CHEVY TRUCK. ★★

BASE ENGINE	2.9L/185-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINES	3.7L/242-hp DOHC I-5; 5.3L/300-hp OHV V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 5M/4A
0-60 MPH	6.9-9.6 sec
TOW/ PAYLOAD	1900-6000/1168-1422 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14-18/19-24 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 4



Chevrolet Equinox

BASE PRICE RANGE: $23,185-$30,540 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: An all-new compact crossover hits the streets for 2010. The redesigned Equinox takes styling cues from its Malibu cousin for an edgier and sportier look. The two new engines, a stylish and content-heavy interior, and an exceptionally quiet cabin make it a worthy contender in its market segment.

COOL FACT: This is the first application of GM's Active Noise Cancellation technology, which uses counteracting soundwaves to ensure a quiet drive.

SUM UP: MORE THAN EXPECTED, MUCH MORE. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.4L/182-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	3.0L/264-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.8-8.7 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-3500/1190 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-22/24-32 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Chevrolet Express

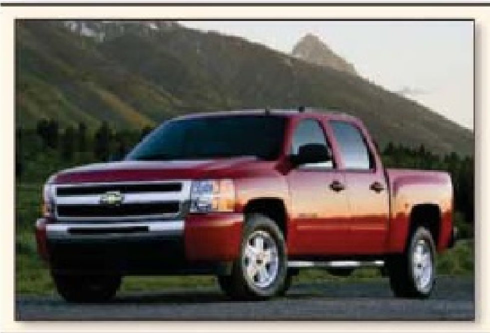
BASE PRICE RANGE: $25,635-$35,535 BODY TYPE: Van

WHAT'S NEW: Chevy's utilitarian business van maintains its pragmatism in 2010 with a short list of upgrades. The 4.8L, 5.3L, and 6.0L engines are now E85 capable and all utilize variable valve timing. The 2500 and 3500 models receive the 6L90 6A gearbox, as well as revised rear axles for improvements in low-rpm torque, fuel economy, and driveability.

COOL FACT: Compared with truck engines of a decade ago, the Gen IV engine family is approximately 90-percent cleaner.

SUM UP: PRACTICALITY THROUGHOUT. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	4.3L/195-hp OHV V-6
OPT ENGINES	4.8L/280-hp OHV V-8; 5.3L/310-hp OHV V-8; 6.0L/323-hp OHV V-8; 6.6L/250-hp t-diesel OHV V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 4A/6A
0-60 MPH	N/A
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	8-15/none
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-15/17-20 mpg (1500)
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 2



Chevrolet Silverado

BASE PRICE RANGE: $20,400-$48,300* BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: The superlative engendering pickup receives several changes for 2010. The 6-sp tranny is standard on regular and extended cabs with the 5.3L, as is a 3.08 axle ratio. StabiliTrak and side curtain airbags are standard across the line, and the engine changes in other 2010 Chevys apply here as well. Last, the interior door trim is revised.

COOL FACT: The Silverado (and Sierra) 5.3L V-8 pickup achieved best-in-class fuel economy, based on the latest EPA estimates.

SUM UP: THE BENCHMARK PICKUP. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	4.3L/195-hp OHV V-6
OPT ENGINES	4.8L/302-hp OHV V-8; 5.3L/315-hp OHV V-8; 6.0L V-8 + elec motors/332-hp; 6.0L/367-hp OHV V-8; 6.2L 403-hp OHV V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 4A/6A
0-60 MPH	6.8-8.5 sec*
TOW/ PAYLOAD	5900-10,000/1418-1802 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14-21/18-22 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 4

* estimated

BASE ENGINE	3.5L/265-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.3-7.8 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500/1058-1077 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-18/23-25 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Ford Edge

BASE PRICE RANGE: $27,695-$36,545* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Fuel economy improves in the 265-hp V-6 by as much as 2 mpg in the city. Otherwise, the Edge still comes with two rows of seats and FWD or AWD. A new Limited interior package comes with Sienna leather seats, special stitching, dark brushed aluminum center stack, and unique floormats. The Edge Sport receives new 20-in. wheels standard.

COOL FACT: James Bond briefly drives a Ford Edge in the film "Quantum of Solace."

SUM UP: HIGH STYLE, MODEST SUBSTANCE. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.5L/171-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINES	3.0/240-hp DOHC V-6; 2.5L DOHC I-4+ elec motors, 177 hp comb
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5M/6A/CVT
0-60 MPH	6.5-8.6 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1000-3500/1000-1150 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-34/24-31 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

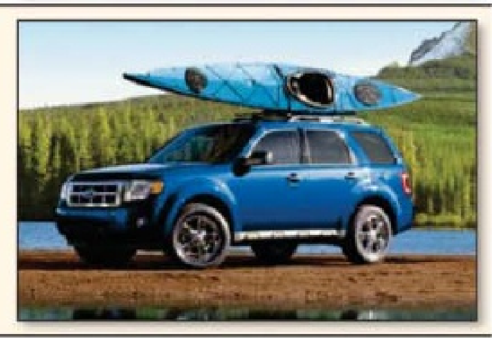
Ford Escape

BASE PRICE RANGE: $21,240-$34,735 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Following last year's updates, including new engines and transmission, the Escape and Escape Hybrid receive only minor changes for 2010. There is now an integrated Blind Spot Mirror, a rearview camera system is available, and there is Active Park Assist for parallel parking. Sync is also a new option for the Escape line.

COOL FACT: With Active Park Assist, you apply throttle and brake—it does the steering.

SUM UP: GETTING OLD, BUT GRACEFULLY. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	4.6L/225-hp SOHC V-8
OPT ENGINES	5.4L/255-hp SOHC V-8; 6.8L/305-hp SOHC V-10; 6.0L/235-hp t-diesel OHV V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD, 4A/5A
0-60 MPH	9.0-15.0 sec*
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	2-15/none
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	Not rated
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: O; Trac: O; Airbags: 2

Ford E-Series

BASE PRICE RANGE: $26,230-$35,565 BODY TYPE: Van

WHAT'S NEW: The E-Series returns unchanged for 2010. It's available as a wagon or commercial van, with four engines and two transmissions. It comes with airbags for the driver and front passenger, AdvanceTrac, tire-pressure monitoring, and side-intrusion door beams standard, and options include integrated trailer brake controller and a rearview camera.

COOL FACT: Optional Ford Work Solutions allows you to keep track of tools, access the Internet, and offer diagnostics from the cab.

SUM UP: LIKE GRANDPA'S AX. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	5.4L/310-hp SOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	8.1-8.7 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	8700-9200/1570-1670 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14/20 mpg (SWB RWD)
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Ford Expedition/EL

BASE PRICE RANGE: $36,010-$51,740 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The Expedition and longer EL are now available with the programmable MyKey vehicle key, and trailer sway control becomes standard equipment (works with AdvanceTrac to detect trailer sway and apply braking and reduce torque to bring the vehicle and trailer under control). Voice-activated Sync is an option.

COOL FACT: You can use MyKey to program the Expedition's top speed and maximum radio volume.

SUM UP: SHARK APPROACHING. GET READY TO JUMP. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.0L/275-hp turbo DOHC I-4*
OPT ENGINE	3.5L/335-hp twin-turbo DOHC V-6*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A*
0-60 MPH	7.0-8.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	2500-5500/1400-1500 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-20/22-29 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles*
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 8*

Ford Explorer (2011)

BASE PRICE RANGE: $28,500-$39,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: All systems were go on the unibody Explorer, introduced as the Explorer America concept (pictured). Engine choices are said to be a 275-hp, 2.0L four-cylinder or the 3.5L, 335-hp EcoBoost V-6, helping provide a 20-30-percent fuel economy improvement over the current V-6 Explorer. Both engines will be backed by a 6A with auto shift control.

COOL FACT: The V-6 version is said to weigh 150 lb less than the current generation.

SUM UP: CAN FORD BOTTLE LIGHTNING TWICE? (NOT RATED)



BASE ENGINE	4.0L/210-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	4.6L/292-hp SOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD/AWD, 5A/6A
0-60 MPH	8.0-8.8 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	5080-7160/1350-1390 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-15/19-21 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Ford Explorer Sport Trac

BASE PRICE RANGE: $28,625-$36,005 BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: The sort-of pickup truck with the SUV cabin returns relatively unchanged, with a choice of V-6 or V-8 in one body style. Little improvements for 2010 include the availability of Sync communications and entertainment system. In addition, chrome roof rails and side steps are now standard on the Limited.

COOL FACT: While the rest of the truck is built in the USA, the V-6 is manufactured in Cologne, Germany.

SUM UP: DOES ANYONE STILL BUY THESE? ★★★



* estimated



Ford F-150

BASE PRICE RANGE: $22,355-$46,495 BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: All-new for 2009, changes are minor for 2010. All RWD F-150s are now rated at 15 city/21 hwy fuel economy, which had been only the SFE's rating last year. Programmable MyKey ignition is now standard on every model above the XL. King Ranch and Platinum models now come with second-row heated seats, power sliding window with defroster.

COOL FACT: In the future, the fuel-efficient, 355-hp EcoBoost V-6 will be added to the F-150 lineup.

SUM UP: STILL AMERICA'S FAVORITE PICKUP. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	4.6L/248-hp SOHC V-8
OPT ENGINES	4.6L/292-hp SOHC V-8; 5.4L/310-hp SOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 4A/6A
0-60 MPH	7.6-10.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	5100-11,300/1420-3030 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14-15/18-21 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Ford F-150 SVT Raptor

BASE PRICE RANGE: $38,995-$41,995 BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: The Raptor is purpose-built for extreme high-speed sand runs, yet is designed to still be a capable daily driver. It comes with such features as an electronic rear locking differential, hill-descent control, tougher components, and an off-road mode with a third throttle map and shift schedule. A new 6.2L V-8 will debut after the Raptor's initial launch.

COOL FACT: Because the Raptor is 8 in. wider than a regular F-150, it needs the federally mandated marker lights normally seen on duallies.

SUM UP: THE COOLEST F-150 EVER BUILT. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.4L/310-hp SOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	6.2L/400-hp SOHC V-8*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	9.5-11.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	6000-8000/1020-3000 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12-14/14-18 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6*



Ford F-250/350/450 Super Duty (2011)

BASE PRICE RANGE: $26,500-$58,000* BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: Big changes for 2011: The new Super Duty gets a redesigned exterior and interior (2010 model shown), plus a Ford-built turbodiesel engine, a 6.7L common-rail V-8 that's quieter, cleaner, and more fuel-efficient, along with a choice of gas engines.

COOL FACT: Piezo injectors in the new 6.7L reduce engine clatter by nearly 50 percent.

SUM UP: HEAVY-DUTY FIGHT JUST GOT INTERESTING. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	5.4L/300-hp SOHC V-8*
OPT ENGINES	6.8L/362-hp SOHC V-10; 6.7L/375-hp twin-t-diesel OHV V-8*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 6M/6A*
0-60 MPH	8.5-10.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	16,000-25,000/3000-6300 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	Not rated
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles*
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: N/A; Trac: N/A; Airbags: 4*



Ford Flex

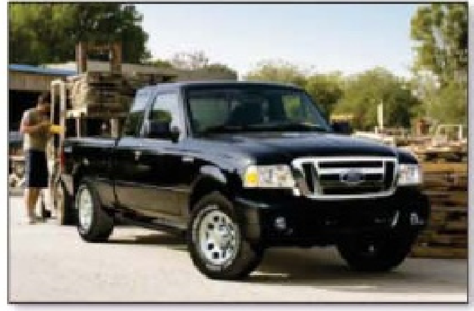
BASE PRICE RANGE: $29,270-$42,785 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Flex's second year brings several improvements to the seven-passenger crossover. A 3.5L twin-turbo EcoBoost engine is a new premium option (AWD only, SEL models and above), with the power of a V-8 (355 hp, 350 lb-ft) and V-6-comparable fuel economy. Also new are the tilt/telescoping wheel, auto-folding second row, paddle-shift transmission (with EcoBoost), trailer-sway control, and Active Park Assist.

COOL FACT: The Flex is available with a second-row refrigerator.

SUM UP: 21ST CENTURY FULL-SIZE FAMILY WAGON. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.5L/262-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	3.5L/355-hp twin-turbo DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	6.3-8.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	4500/N/A lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-17/22-24 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles*
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Ford Ranger

BASE PRICE RANGE: $18,160-$26,290 BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: Old, old, old Ranger soldiers on for another year, but rumors suggest a world-market replacement is around the corner. Nothing changes for now, so you can choose from regular cab or 2- or 4-door SuperCabs, and a 2.3L four or a 4.0L six. A 7-ft bed is available, a Class III trailer hitch is standard equipment.

COOL FACT: Some elements of the current Ranger haven't changed since 1983. No kidding.

SUM UP: WHAT METHUSELAH WOULD DRIVE. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.3L/143-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	4.0L/207-hp SOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 5M/5A
0-60 MPH	7.6-9.7 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1580-6000/1260 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14-21/18-26 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 4



Ford Transit Connect

BASE PRICE RANGE: $21,475-$23,045 BODY TYPE: Van

WHAT'S NEW: Ford's van may be new to North America, but it's been a popular seller in Europe for nearly a decade. The Transit Connect is shorter than a midsize sedan, yet is said to provide the cargo capacity of a commercial van (but will fit in a garage), and is aimed squarely at small-business owners. The only powertrain option is a 2.0L four backed by a 4A.

COOL FACT: The Transit Connect's 1600-lb payload is comparable to that of a half-ton pickup.

SUM UP: FINALLY—A LITTLE VAN FOR GUYS. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.0L/136-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD, 4A
0-60 MPH	12.0 sec*
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	2-5/none
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	22/25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: O; Trac: O; Airbags: 4

* estimated



GMC Yukon/Yukon XL

BASE PRICE RANGE: $38,700-$55,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: An eclectic laundry list of changes for 2010 Yukons. The 4.8L engine is gone, as is the 4-sp gearbox. The 6.2L replaces the optional 6.0L engine on the Yukon XL. All Yukons gain OnStar 8.2, as well as an enhanced battery-saver mode. In addition, the 5.3Ls receive E85 capability and cam phasing. A Yukon version of the Tahoe's XFE is also available.

COOL FACT: GM's hybrid system allows the 6.0L V-8 to operate in its more economical V-4 mode for longer periods to improve overall mileage.

SUM UP: THE SUBURBAN'S PLAIN SISTER. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.3L/310-320-hp OHV V-8
OPT ENGINES	6.0L/367-hp OHV V-8; 6.0L OHV V-8 + elec motors/332-hp; 6.2L/403-hp OHV V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 6A/CVT
0-60 MPH	6.7-9.2 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	5700-8600/1315-2421 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12-21/17-22 mpg (1500)
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Honda Accord Crosstour

BASE PRICE RANGE: $23,000-$29,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: With Accord Crosstour, Honda is testing the same waters as Acura has with its ZDX. The coupelike SUV is based on the Accord platform and can be expected to share powertrains with the sedan—minus manual, we expect. This crossover will likely match up with competitors like Toyota Venza and is rumored to provide more interior volume.

COOL FACT: Honda hasn't offered an Accord wagon since 1997—and this is much cooler.

SUM UP: BECAUSE NO ONE WOULD BUY AN ACCORD HATCH. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	2.4L/190-hp DOHC I-4*
OPT ENGINE	3.5L/271-hp DOHC V-6*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5A*
0-60 MPH	9.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-3500/1100-1300 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-18/22-23 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6*



Honda CR-V

BASE PRICE RANGE: $22,100-$28,200* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The CR-V's 2010 refinements include upgrades to the I-4 that provide a 14-hp power increase and 1-mpg fuel-economy improvement city and highway. There's also a freshened grille, front/rear bumpers, and hood, and new, 10-spoke alloy wheels. It has wider center armrests, the satellite-linked nav system now comes with Bluetooth.

BEST BUY: With a boatload of safety equipment and 5A standard, the LX is a great value.

SUM UP: PRECISION-BUILT ENTRY-LEVEL SUV. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.4L/180-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	9.1 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500/1011-1171 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	21/27-28 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Honda Element

BASE PRICE RANGE: $21,200-$24,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: In mid-2009, the Element got a more chiseled body and a refreshed interior, so not much is happening for 2010. The Dog Friendly Element, which includes an extendable ramp, cushioned pet bed with platform, pet restraints, rear fan, seat covers, rubber floormats, and a spill-resistant water bowl, will be on sale this fall.

COOL FACT: Optional center console can also serve as a removable cooler.

SUM UP: AIMED AT THE YOUTH MARKET. MISSED. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.4L/166-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5M/5A
0-60 MPH	8.6-10.8 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500/893-917 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18-20/23-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Honda Odyssey

BASE PRICE RANGE: $27,515-$41,465 BODY TYPE: Minivan

WHAT'S NEW: New color choices. Otherwise, all remains the same—244-hp V-6 with optional cylinder shutoff, 5A, third-row Magic Seat, and a choice of four trim levels. Options include nav, DVD rear entertainment with 9-in. screen, backup camera, power side doors/tailgate, Bluetooth.

COOL FACT: One-touch third row folds flat into the floor; optional second row provides extra storage when in place, creates a walk-through to third row when removed.

SUM UP: TOP-NOTCH PEOPLE-HAULER. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.5L/244-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	8.2 sec
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	7-8/3rd row
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-17/23-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Honda Pilot

BASE PRICE RANGE: $28,605-$39,355 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Not much: three new colors. Otherwise, the SUV basically stays the same as when it was completely redesigned for 2009. The large unibody sport/ute is powered by a 250-hp V-6 with cylinder deactivation and comes in LX, EX, EX-L, and Touring trim levels. Options include nav, DVD entertainment, Bluetooth, satellite radio, tri-zone climate control, leather seats, and rearview camera (EX-L only).

COOL FACT: Hidden underfloor storage area can hold 2.8 cu ft of valuables.

SUM UP: A YEAR OLD. LOOKS OLDER. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.5L/250-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	8.0-8.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500-4500/1592-1642 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-17/22-23 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

* estimated

BASE ENGINE	3.5L/250-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	7.7 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	5000/1497-1546 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15/20 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Honda Ridgeline

BASE PRICE RANGE: $29,160-$35,140 BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: The Ridgeline was treated to 50 changes and additions for 2009, including more power, more torque within a broader torque band, and revised 5A gear ratios. Two tie-downs were added, and the Class III hitch and daytime running lights are standard. For 2010, there are three new colors: Alabaster Silver, Crystal Black, and Polished Metal.

COOL FACT: The Ridgeline is the only truck on the market that has a lockable trunk in the bed.

SUM UP: A PEOPLE-FRIENDLY MULTI-TOOL. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.7L/239-hp DOHC I-5
OPT ENGINE	5.3L/300-hp OHV V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 5M/4A
0-60 MPH	8.3-11.1 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	4400-6000/1031-1312 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-14/16-18 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 4

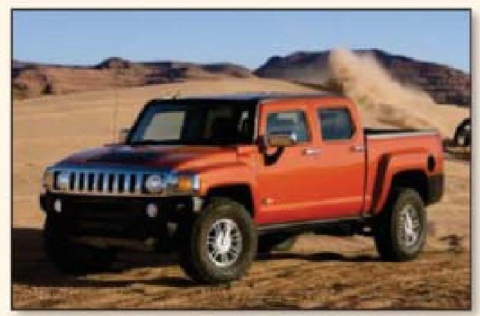
Hummer H3/H3T

BASE PRICE RANGE: $31,500-$44,000* BODY TYPE: SUV/pickup

WHAT'S NEW: Sichuan Tengzhong and GM have agreed (pending finalization) to maintain H3 production at the latter's Shreveport, Louisiana, plant until 2012, enabling this all-American icon to stay that way for the time being. H3s are expected to receive little to no changes for the coming year.

COOL FACT: The H3T offers first-in-its-class front and rear locking differentials for true slow-go trail crawling.

SUM UP: CAPABILITY TO SPARE. BUT NOT MUCH ELSE. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.4L/175-hp DOHC I-4*
OPT ENGINE	3.5L/275-hp DOHC V-6*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6M/6A
0-60 MPH	8.2-8.6 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	2000-3500/1292 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	20-23/26-28 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

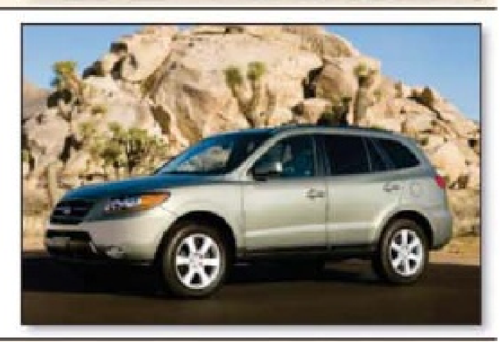
Hyundai Santa Fe

BASE PRICE RANGE: $22,500-$31,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Both engine options have changed. The 2.7L six has been replaced by a 2.4L four in the GLS and Limited, and the 3.3L six is now a 3.5L V-6 (SE and Limited V6). The automatic is a 6-sp, and the I-4 comes with a 6M. A new alternator management system helps improve fuel economy. Rear spoiler and heated mirrors are now standard.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: The new V-6 is more powerful and more refined—the SE is worth the minor extra cost.

SUM UP: THE QUIET ACHIEVER. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.4L/140-hp DOHC I-4*
OPT ENGINE	None*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6M/6A
0-60 MPH	8.7-10.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-2000/1205 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	19-22/25-30 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6*

Hyundai Tucson

BASE PRICE RANGE: $18,900-$26,600* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: All new for 2010. Exterior design is much sleeker and sportier than that of the first-gen SUV. Under the hood, there's a fuel-efficient 2.4L four-cylinder with a choice of 6-sp manual or automatic transmission. Fuel economy is up to 30 mpg highway, a 20-percent improvement over the I-4 predecessor with the automatic.

COOL FACT: Exterior styling is based on the looks of the ix (pictured), revealed earlier this year.

SUM UP: REDEFINES ITS CATEGORY. (NOT RATED)



BASE ENGINE	3.8L/260-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	7.7-8.0 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500/1466-1477 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-16/22-23 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Hyundai Veracruz

BASE PRICE RANGE: $28,895-$36,645 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Hyundai has made more equipment standard on GLS and Limited trims of the seven-passenger SUV, including power driver's seat, roof-rack side rails, backup warning system, foglights, automatic headlights, and leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob. The only other change is to paint color.

COOL FACT: For the Veracruz's cabin noise levels, Hyundai benchmarked the Lexus RX 350.

SUM UP: STILL SURPRISES. ★★★★





BASE ENGINE	3.5L/297-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	7.0-7.5 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	3000/948-1076 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-17/23-24 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Infiniti EX35

BASE PRICE RANGE: $35,200-$39,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Largely carryover, the sporty RWD/AWD compact EX (base/Journey) crossover gets revamps to various option packages, adds heated front seats to AWD models, Bluetooth to Journey trim, and USB/iPod inputs to all versions. Navigation becomes a stand-alone option, also with new features, while the Bose Package gains the Around View Monitor.

BEST BUY: Available---and more-affordable---navigation upgrade makes the already well-appointed "base" EX an even more compelling choice.

SUM UP: STYLE STILL TRUMPS UTILITY. ★★★



* estimated



Infiniti FX35/50

BASE PRICE RANGE: $43,500-$60,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Infiniti simplifies/revamps option packages for its five-passenger sport wagon set (FX35 RWD/AWD and FX50 AWD) and makes Bluetooth/USB/iPod connectivity standard on all three of these high-styled V-6 and V-8 haulers. The available Bose Premium Audio and Infiniti Hard Drive Navigation System packages also get feature enhancements.

BEST BUY: An FX35 in either configuration nets most of the meaningful flash and fury of the FX50 at a far more affordable price point.

SUM UP: WAY MORE FUN THAN FUNCTION. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.5L/303-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	5.0L/390-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 7A
0-60 MPH	5.2-6.1 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	2000-3500/1182-1213 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14-16/20-23 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Infiniti QX56

BASE PRICE RANGE: $56,915-$60,015 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: On sale since May, this full-size, full-featured SUV lost two exterior colors but is otherwise unchanged for 2010. RWD and dual-range All-Mode 4WD versions of the 7/8-seat QX56 come loaded with leather, a navigation system, 12-speaker Bose premium audio, and a 9.3-gig Music Box hard drive and offer a rear-seat DVD entertainment system option.

COOL FACT: The QX56's spacious second-row seat still offers the most legroom—41.8 inches—of any vehicle in its class.

SUM UP: BIG. WHICH IS GOOD. AND BAD. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.6L/320-hp DOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 5A
0-60 MPH	6.9-7.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	8900-9000/1397-1553 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12/17-18 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Jeep Commander

BASE PRICE RANGE: $30,400-$47,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The 5.7L Hemi is now standard on Limited models and optional on the Sport—and the 4.7L V-8 is gone. The 3.7L V-6 and the Hemi are backed by different 5-sp automatics. Power liftgate is now standard on the Limited, and there are new chrome options (wheels, trim, assist handles) throughout the line.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: The Hemi. It adds 3900 lb of tow capacity and 147 hp with the same highway mpg as the 3.7L (and only loses 1 mpg in the city).

SUM UP: BOXY, BUT NOT ROOMY. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.7L/210-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	5.7L/357-hp OHV V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 5A
0-60 MPH	7.9-9.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500-7400/1110-1370 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-15/19-20 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab S; Trac: S; Airbags: 4



Jeep Grand Cherokee (2011)

BASE PRICE RANGE: $31,000-$46,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Redesigned off-roader is all new for 2011, based on a version of the Mercedes-Benz ML's platform, with a lux cabin and a choice of the 5.7L Hemi or an all-new 3.6L V-6 with VVT. QuadraLift air suspension lifts the G.C. up to 4.5 in., for 11.1 in. of ground clearance. No news on whether the SRT or the diesel will return for 2011.

COOL FACT: Selec-Terrain is a new dial-controlled traction control that lets the driver choose between sand/mud, sport, auto, snow, and rock modes.

SUM UP: A COOLER, CLASSIER JEEP. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	3.6L/280-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	5.7L/360-hp OHV V-8*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 5A
0-60 MPH	6.8-8.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500-7400/1480-2030 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-16/19-23 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles*
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Jeep Liberty

BASE PRICE RANGE: $24,000-$28,800* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The Liberty receives interactive Decel Fuel Shut Off, which turns off fuel during deceleration to improve fuel economy. Also, front-row active head restraints, air filtration, front-passenger fold-flat seat, and premium stain-repellent seat fabric are now standard on all models. The Limited gets Uconnect (Bluetooth), front-passenger express-up power window, leather seat trim, and heated front seats.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: 4WD Liberty with the full-length Sky Slider canvas top.

SUM UP: IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.7L/210-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 4A
0-60 MPH	9.0-9.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	2000-5000/950-1150 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-16/21-22 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab S; Trac: S; Airbags: 4



Jeep Patriot

BASE PRICE RANGE: $18,300-$24,800* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The Patriot is now available with a 5M behind the 2.0L four, upping highway fuel economy on the 2WD Sport to 29 mpg. Standard automatic is gone—the only other trans option is a CVT. All models now have driver and front-passenger active head restraints. Remote start is available and automatic climate control is available on the Patriot Limited.

BEST BUY: Optional fold-flat front passenger seat and fold-flat second row make this one of the most versatile interiors in its class.

SUM UP: CUTE—BUT NOT TOO CUTE. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.0L/158-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	2.4L/172-hp DOHC I-4
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5M/CVT
0-60 MPH	9.2-10.1 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1000-2000/925 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	20-23/22-29 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab S; Trac: S; Airbags: 4

* estimated

BASE ENGINE	3.8L/202-hp OHV V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 6M/4A
0-60 MPH	9.5-10.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1000-3500/740-1150 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15/19-20 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab S; Trac: S; Airbags: 2

Jeep Wrangler

BASE PRICE RANGE: $21,600-$33,100* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Sunrider soft top becomes easier to remove for 2010, and foglights and tow hooks are standard on all models. The base two-door Sport now gets cloth seats (vinyl no more), and two-tone leather seats are available on the Sahara and Rubicon. Wranglers also have new wheel designs and changes have come to the color palette.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: Those who love the rough stuff should get the Rubicon, arguably the best-equipped rock-crawler from the factory.

SUM UP: A TRUE AMERICAN CLASSIC. ★★★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.8L/276-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	4.6L/337-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 5A/6A
0-60 MPH	6.5-7.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	5000-7500/1256-1604 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-17/20-22 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Kia Borrego

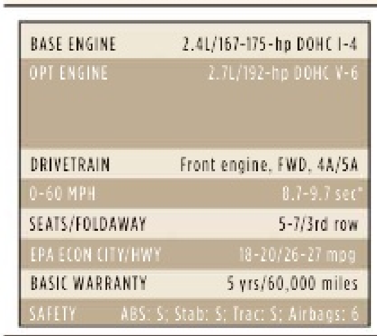
BASE PRICE RANGE: $27,300-$41,100* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: As of press time, Kia had not announced any changes to the midsize body-on-frame SUV. The sophomore Borrego is available in LX and EX trims, with fully independent suspension and a choice of RWD, part-time 4WD, or full-time 4WD (with a dual-range transfer case), with a standard 276-hp V-6 and an optional 337-hp V-8.

COOL FACT: The Borrego represents the first time Kia used a V-8 in a vehicle.

SUM UP: GOOD. IN PARTS. ★★★





BASE ENGINE	2.4L/167-175-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	2.7L/192-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD, 4A/5A
0-60 MPH	8.7-9.7 sec*
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	5-7/3rd row
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18-20/26-27 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

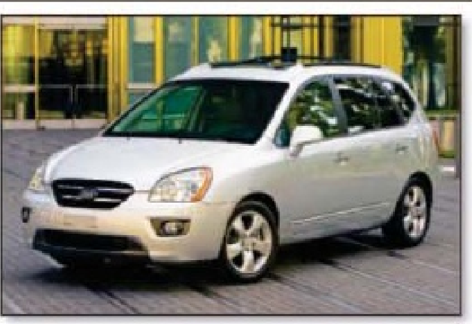
Kia Rondo

BASE PRICE RANGE: $18,300-$23,200* BODY TYPE: Minivan

WHAT'S NEW: Falling somewhere in function between a minivan and a small SUV, the Rondo is still offered with I-4 and V-6 engines, and LX and EX trim levels. The side mirrors now have integrated turn-signal indicators, and there are new wheel designs for 2010. An EcoMinder indicator is standard and a rear backup camera and trip computer are new options.

BEST BUY: Opting for the third row and the V-6 will provide efficient power and the ability to carry seven people at a bargain price.

SUM UP: BARGAIN PEOPLE-MOVER. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.8L/250-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	8.0-8.5 sec
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	7/3rd row
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16/23 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Kia Sedona

BASE PRICE RANGE: $22,200-$28,800* BODY TYPE: Minivan

WHAT'S NEW: The Sedona is available as a base-model short wheelbase or as a long-wheelbase minivan in LX or EX trims. The 3.8L V-6 was recalibrated for 2010 for improved refinement. There are new chrome accents inside and out, and the EX gets a new rear spoiler. A rearview backup camera is standard on the EX and optional on the rest of the line.

COOL FACT: One of very few minivans on the market offered in two wheelbase lengths.

SUM UP: BEST VALUE IN ITS CLASS. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.4L/174-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	3.5L/277-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5M/6M/6A
0-60 MPH	9.2-10.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500-5500/1100-1400 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-19/22-28 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6*

Kia Sorento (2011)

BASE PRICE RANGE: $23,000-$28,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Everything is new for 2011, and in the meantime, there is no 2010 Sorento. However, what you do have to look forward to is the new Sorento's unibody, a dramatic change from the previous body-on-frame structure. This change helps allow for seven-passenger seating, as does the 4.0-in.-longer vehicle.

COOL FACT: Kia gave the world a preview of the new Sorento by revealing the Korean-market version at the Seoul Motor Show earlier this year.

SUM UP: NEW PLATFORM MAKES IT COMPETITIVE. (NOT RATED)



BASE ENGINE	2.0L/140-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	2.7L/173-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5M/4A
0-60 MPH	10.3-10.7 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-2000/1263-1323 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18-20/23-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

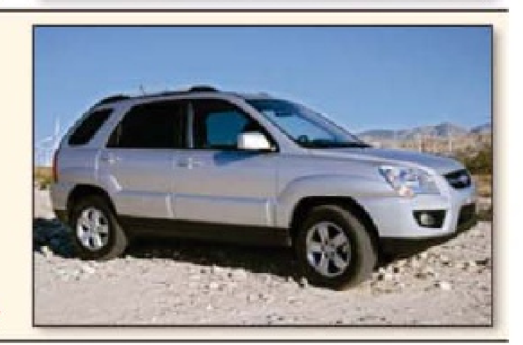
Kia Sportage

BASE PRICE RANGE: $17,500-$24,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Minor changes grace the interior of the 2010 Sportage, but you won't notice the new model year by checking out the exterior, as there's nothing new there. The cabin has a new illuminated vanity mirror on the visor (standard), eight-way driver-seat adjustment (standard), EcoMinder indicator (standard), and rear sonar (optional). It's still offered with front or all-wheel drive, with I-4 or V-6 power.

BEST BUY: If you aren't in a big hurry, the four-cyl LX is a terrific value.

SUM UP: WAIT FOR THE ALL-NEW 2011 MODEL. ★★★



* estimated



Land Rover LR2

BASE PRICE: $36,350 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: THE LR2 continues its successful run with minimal change for 2010. The premium compact SUV receives a new digital clock in its driver information center, a new interior color combination (Storm Grey Napoli perforated leather seating surfaces and Ebony carpeting) and an optional HD Digital radio. Four new exterior paint colors are added.

COOL FACT: Special Rear End Ancillary Drive arrangement was engineered to trim the overall length of the LR2's I-6 engine to only 23.6-in.

SUM UP: LOOKS LIKE A SOFT-ROADER. ISN'T. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.2L/230-hp DOHC I-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	8.8 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500/1100 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15/22 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 7



Land Rover LR4

BASE PRICE RANGE: $48,100-$51,750 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: All-new 2010 LR4 comes with a new, powerful 375-hp V-8 mated to a super-smooth 6-sp adaptive tranny. In addition, LR4 is even more off-road capable than before thanks to revised Terrain Response and Hill Descent Control systems.

COOL FACT: On steep descents, Gradient Release Control maintains brake pressure after brake pedal release, then progressively eases the pressure to control momentum and acceleration.

SUM UP: A THOROUGHBRED THROUGH AND THROUGH. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.0L/375-hp DOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	7716/1325 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12/17 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 8



Land Rover Range Rover LRX (2011)

BASE PRICE: $38,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Unveiled at Detroit 2008, LRX concept may finally see production thanks to a possible grant from the U.K. government, which is seeking ways to promote creation of smaller, higher-mileage vehicles. Diesel, hybrid, and small-capacity gasoline engines are part of the plan.

COOL FACT: Very green with vegetable-tanned, chromium-free leather and headliner and vanilla "suede" door inserts of recycled glass bottles.

SUM UP: LOOK OUT, AUDI, BENZ, AND BMW. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	2.0L t-diesel DOHC I-4 + elec motors
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A*
0-60 MPH	N/A
TOW/PAYLOAD	N/A
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	50 mpg (comb)*
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Land Rover Range Rover

BASE PRICE RANGE: $79,275-$95,125 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: A host of new features and improvements for the 2010 MY keeps the Range Rover at the top of its class: two new 5.0L V-8s, one of which sports a sixth-gen Eaton supercharger; an advanced new Adaptive Dynamics system, new braking system, and updated Terrain Response.

COOL FACT: The new V-8s boast an industry first: a centrally mounted, multihole, spray-guided fuel-injection system that delivers fuel at up to 2175 psi directly to the cylinder.

SUM UP: A LUXURY CAR FOR ALL OCCASIONS. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.0L/375-hp DOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	5.0L/510-hp s-charged DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	5.9-7.2 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	7716/1164-1358 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12/18 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 9



Land Rover Range Rover Sport

BASE PRICE RANGE: $60,495-$74,195 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Major revamp for 2010. In addition to the two new engines, the Sport benefits from an updated exterior and the same chassis refinements as on the new Range Rover.

COOL FACT: One connectivity port on the new Portable Audio Interface is a dedicated iPod point that helps prevent the device from coming loose in extreme driving conditions.

SUM UP: ARMANI-WEARING URBAN WARRIOR. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.0L/375-hp DOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	5.0L/510-hp s-charged DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	5.9-7.2 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	7716/1164-1358 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12-13/17-18 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Lexus GX 460

BASE PRICE: $50,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Lexus would provide no details at all about the next generation of its midsize luxury SUV, which goes on sale in December (2009 GX 470 pictured). We suspect this 4WD all-terrain traveler will be slightly larger and more refined, seat seven, and swap its current 4.7L V-8 for a new, more powerful/efficient 4.6L, becoming a GX 460 in the process.

ONLY FACT: Parent company Toyota trademarked GX 460 badging nomenclature back in 2007.

SUM UP: BADGE ENGINEERING 101. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	4.6L/310-hp DOHC V-8*
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD
0-60 MPH	8.1 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	7000/1500 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15/19 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

* estimated



Mahindra SUV (2011)

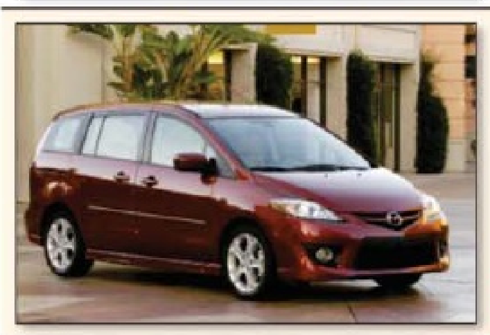
BASE PRICE RANGE: $24,000-$26,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: As little as we know about the pickup, we know even less about the SUV Mahindra is bringing to North America. What we've heard, though, is that the SUV will probably go on sale a year after the pickup—late 2010. We expect the SUV—name not yet announced—to be powered by the same 2.2L common-rail clean diesel four as the pickup.

COOL FACT: Mahindra is ready to partner with any automaker. You could see Mahindras sold next to everything from Dodges to Hondas.

SUM UP: CHEAP. BUT NO THRILLS. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	2.2L/140-hp diesel DOHC I-4*
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	10.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	4000/2315-2600 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	25/35 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles*
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 4*



Mazda5

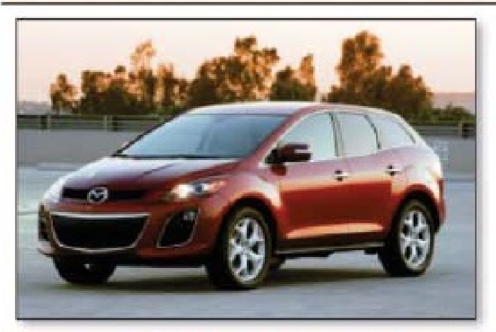
BASE PRICE RANGE: $18,745-$23,755* BODY TYPE: Minivan

WHAT'S NEW: The littlest minivan on the market in North America returns with six-passenger seating, 153-hp I-4 propulsion, and a choice of 5M or sport automatic. Six airbags—including three-row side air curtains—are standard. Climate control, touch-screen nav, Bluetooth, rear-seat DVD, rain sensing windshield wipers, and second-row captain's chairs are available.

COOL FACT: Basically a six-passenger Mazda3 with sliding doors.

SUM UP: AS CLOSE TO A COOL MINIVAN AS YOU CAN GET. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.3L/153-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	8.5 sec
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	6/2nd, 3rd rows
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	21-22/27-28 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Mazda CX-7

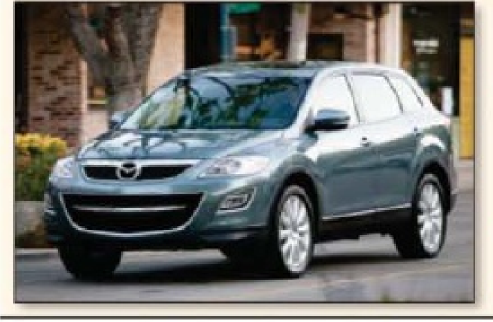
BASE PRICE RANGE: $22,300-$33,635 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: A total refresh, including a new normally aspirated 2.5L engine backed by a 5A as standard. The 2.3L returns unchanged as the optional choice. Interior and exterior get minor updates, and there are new wheel designs as well. The redesigned steering wheel now telescopes, and a color backup camera and blind-spot monitor are optional.

COOL FACT: The CX-7's 66-deg. windshield angle is smaller than that of some sports cars.

SUM UP: MOST SPORTING ENTRY-LEVEL CROSSOVER. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.5L/161-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	2.3L/244-hp turbo DOHC I-4
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5A/6A
0-60 MPH	7.7-8.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-2000/1000 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-20/23-28 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Mazda CX-9

BASE PRICE RANGE: $30,800-$36,300* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Like the CX-7, the CX-9 also gets a refresh for 2010. The front end was redesigned, and there are new headlights, taillights, foglights, and side mirrors. Inside, there are new rear HVAC controls, and optional heated seats allow a choice of high or low warmth. The console lid is now dual-opening, and leather and cloth seats have been refined.

COOL FACT: First in its class to offer blind-spot monitoring, Bluetooth audio, and is said to have the best turning radius in its class.

SUM UP: AN SUV WITH DRIVER APPEAL. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.7L/273-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.8 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	2000-3500/1493-1521 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-16/21-22 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Mazda Tribute

BASE PRICE RANGE: $20,700-$34,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The s Sport and Touring models are eliminated, and the towing package is now standard on the s GT. The 3.0L six is now FlexFuel compatible. There is an ambient temp gauge, electrochromatic rearview mirror with rearview display, and an overhead console with a storage bin and map lights standard on Touring hybrid.

COOL FACT: Fabrics used in the interior of the Sport and Touring models are made from 35-percent recycled yarns.

SUM UP: IT IS EASY BEING GREEN. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.5L/171-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINES	3.0L/240-hp DOHC V-6; 2.5L I-4+ elec motors/177-hp comb
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5M/6A/CVT
0-60 MPH	6.5-8.6 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1000-3500/1000-1500 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-34/24-31 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Mercedes-Benz G-Class

BASE PRICE RANGE: $101,200-$120,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The increasingly retro-looking G-wagon gets several exterior enhancements, such as body-color door handles, new side molding, a spare wheel cover, and a sport-tuned exhaust system. Both the G550 and G55 AMG interiors gain ambient lighting as standard, a leather dashboard, an updated key and a heated wood/leather steering wheel.

COOL FACT: G-Class 4WD features a two-speed transfer case and three independent locking differentials to tackle a wide range of terrain.

SUM UP: OLD SCHOOL. AND PROUD OF IT. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.4L/382-hp DOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	4.5L/500-hp s-charged SOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 7A
0-60 MPH	5.4-6.0 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	7000/1500 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	11/15 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

* estimated

BASE ENGINE	3.0L/210-hp t-diesel DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINES	4.6L/335-hp DOHC V-8; 5.5L/382-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 7A
0-60 MPH	6.4-7.1 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	7500/1509-1631 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-18/17-24 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 9

Mercedes-Benz GL-Class

BASE PRICE RANGE: $59,075-$83,725 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Last year's GL320 BlueTEC is renamed the GL350 BlueTEC for 2010 and gains new 20-in., five-twin-spoke wheels in the bargain. The BlueTEC and GL450 models get a noticeable restyle with new headlamps and LED taillights, grille, front and rear bumpers, chrome skidplates. GL550 gets new 21-in. wheels and heated/ventilated front seats standard.

COOL FACT: M-B's new Post Safe system features automatic door unlocking and engine and fuel-system shutdown following an accident.

SUM UP: MERCEDES' BEST SUV. ★★★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.5L/268-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 7A
0-60 MPH	6.5-6.6 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500/1200 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16/21-22 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

Mercedes-Benz GLK350

BASE PRICE RANGE: $34,775-$36,775 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: "Junior-size" GLK receives a few mid-model-year flourishes, including a Premium leather steering wheel and an advanced tire-pressure-monitoring system as standard. New options, such as Keyless-Go, a tilting parking mirror, Parking Assist (rearview camera required), and Sirius Traffic, have been added to the already extensive mix.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: A fully loaded RWD version because this SUV is never, ever going off-road.

SUM UP: LOOKS LIKE A REAL SUV. ISN'T. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.5L/268-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINES	3.0L/210-hp t-diesel DOHC V-6; 3.5L DOHC V-6 + elec motors/335-hp comb; 5.5L/382-hp DOHC V-8; 6.2L/503-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 7A/8A
0-60 MPH	4.5-8.1 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	7200/1600-1650 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	11-21/14-24 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 8

Mercedes-Benz ML-Class

BASE PRICE RANGE: $46,575-$91,925 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: A fifth model is added to the ML's lineup as the ML450 Hybrid bows in 2010. Powered by a 3.5L V-6 and two electric motors, the Hybrid features an 8-sp tranny that can act as either a fixed-gear automatic or a CVT. Other changes include the renamed and rewheeled ML350 BlueTEC, along with standard burled-walnut trim on all models.

COOL FACT: Hybrid is the only two-mode from GM/DaimlerChrysler/BMW development project employing Atkinson-cycle engine for max economy.

SUM UP: WHEN A LEXUS HYBRID IS TOO DOWNMARKET. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.5L/268-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	3.0L/210-hp t-diesel DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 7A
0-60 MPH	8.0-8.6 sec
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	6-7/none
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-18/19-24 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 8

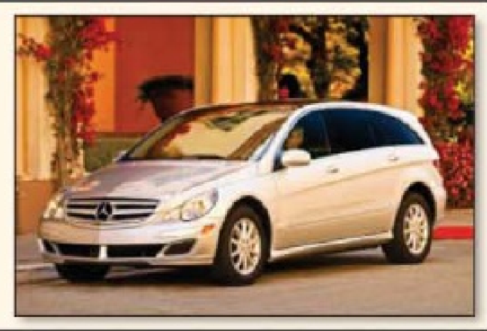
Mercedes-Benz R-Class

BASE PRICE RANGE: $48,600-$50,100* BODY TYPE: Minivan

WHAT'S NEW: Limited changes. It shouldn't come as a surprise that the R320 BlueTEC is now the R350. Besides a new name, the BlueTEC gains, as standard, chrome trim, blue-tinted glass, and darkened tail lenses. The R350 4Matic gets 19-in. wheels, privacy glass, and the darker tail lenses. As with other M-Bs, all models get a new leather steering wheel.

BEST BUY: While the R350 BlueTEC costs some $1500 more, its better fuel economy and greater low-end grunt make it the perfect team hauler.

SUM UP: FOR THE MINIVAN PHOBIC. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.5L/171-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINES	3.0L/240-hp DOHC V-6; 2.5L I-4+ elec motors/177-hp comb
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A/CVT
0-60 MPH	6.5-8.6 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1000-3500/1000-1500 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-34/24-31 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Mercury Mariner

BASE PRICE RANGE: $23,760-$32,470 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Big changes for 2009—a more powerful, more efficient four (also the basis for the Hybrid powertrain), a 6A replaced the 4-sp—mean few updates for the 2010 model year. An integrated blind-spot mirror is added, MyKey is standard, and optional fare includes a rearview camera system, Active Park Assist, and newest version of Sync.

COOL FACT: The Hybrid's interior uses eco-friendly seat fabric made from 100-percent recycled materials.

SUM UP: THRIFT, WITH A SPLASH OF STYLE. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	4.0L/210-hp SOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	4.6L/292-hp SOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 5A/6A
0-60 MPH	7.6-8.8 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	5000-7040/1353-1440 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-15/19-21 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Mercury Mountaineer

BASE PRICE RANGE: $29,895-$37,595 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Most changes for 2010 are to the availability of features on the Premier trim level. The moonroof, premium audio, and heated leather seats with perforated leather and power memory are now standard with the Premier package. Other than that, the Mountaineer is essentially the same—but there are two new colors, Blue Flame and White Platinum.

COOL FACT: Sirius Travel Link provides current weather, fuel prices, sports scores, and movie showings.

SUM UP: HEY, LOOK AT ME! ★★★



* estimated





Mini Crossman/Crossman S

BASE PRICE RANGE: $22,500-$26,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Crossman is the longest Mini to date (158 in.) and features AWD, four doors, and four single seats. It gets same two I-4 engines that power the Clubman/Clubman S. Even if only half the bells and whistles from the concept make it into the production version, the Crossman will be Mini's most techno-savvy vehicle on the market.

COOL FACT: Concept's central instrument panel is a globe that uses laser-projection tech, enabling driver and passenger to view separate displays.

SUM UP: GROWING THE MINI FRANCHISE. LITERALLY. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	1.6L/118-hp SOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	1.6L/172-hp turbo SOHC I-4
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6M/6A
TOW/PAYLOAD	N/A
0-60 MPH	N/A
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	N/A
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: O; Trac: O; Airbags: 4



Mitsubishi Endeavor

BASE PRICE RANGE: $28,739-$32,239 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: While the LS AWD departs, the remaining Endeavor models (LS/SE/SE AWD) get a restyled grille and tailgate plus revised alloy wheels. All versions of this midsize, five-seat V-6 SUV add Bluetooth with the SEs also gaining auto climate control and leatherette console trim. The SE AWD offers a new Navigation & Sunroof Package with backup camera.

BEST BUY: The SE step-up nets a host of value-matched features, including full leather, auto-climate control, and Rockford-Fosgate audio.

SUM UP: TRIES HARDER—MODESTLY SUCCESSFUL. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.8L/225-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 4A
0-60 MPH	8.3-8.8 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-3500/1081-1181 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15/19-21 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Mitsubishi Outlander

BASE PRICE RANGE: $21,600-$28,100* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Highlight of Mitsu's SUV lineup, the Outlander (ES/SE/XLS/GT) gets an Evo-inspired restyle of its front quarters backed by a host of tasteful interior tweaks. The 3.0L V-6 in the XLS and new enthusiast-oriented GT moves from 220 to 230 hp and offers fatter power/torque curves plus better mpg. New GT also comes with unique Evo-derived AWD.

COOL FACT: The GT borrows the Evo's Super All-Wheel Control logic and uses an electronically controlled limited-slip diff on its front axle.

SUM UP: COOL-ISH. BUT NO ONE NOTICES. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.4L/168-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	3.0L/230-hp SOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A/CVT
0-60 MPH	8.1-10.1 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-3500/1048-1334 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-20/24-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Nissan Armada

BASE PRICE RANGE: $38,010-$52,990 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: A lineup revamp sends full-size body-on-frame SUV into 2010 in SE, Titanium, and Platinum Edition guises. All models seat seven, share the same 317-hp V-8, offer RWD/4WD configs, and benefit from new NVH-attenuating motor mounts. Revised/enhanced option packages net the SE a new Tow Package and the SE RWD gains front-side airbags.

COOL FACT: The Armada's slick dual-range AWD system can send up to 50 percent of the engine's torque to the front wheels as traction dictates.

SUM UP: SWALLOWS PEOPLE, STUFF, AND GAS. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.6L/317-hp DOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 5A
0-60 MPH	8.0-9.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	9000-9100/1309-1742 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	12/18 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Nissan Frontier

BASE PRICE RANGE: $18,340-$30,620 BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: King Cab and Extended Cab body styles with RWD/AWD and I-4/V-6 drivetrain choices, the midsize Frontier receives a host of functional upgrades for 2010. All V-6 models add side/side-curtain airbags and VDC while SE/LE V-6s add Active Brake Limited Slip. Autoshifted SE/LE 4WD models get standard Hill Start Assist/Hill Descent Control.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: Off-road-raging PRO-4X model brings serious chassis/wheel/tire upgrades, skidplates, and an electronic locking rear diff.

SUM UP: PRIMO PERFORMER ON ANY TERRAIN. ★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.5L/152-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	4.0L/261-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/4WD, 5M/6M/5A
0-60 MPH	7.3-8.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500-6500/994-1484 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-19/19-23 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: O; Trac: O; Airbags: 2



Nissan Murano

BASE PRICE RANGE: $28,750-$38,250* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Redone for 2009, the midsize Murano (S/SL/LE) gets modest tweaks. Nissan's five-seat FWD/AWD crossover adds a new FWD LE variant and makes Intelligent Key standard on S and SL models. The latter also adds a Vehicle Security System and privacy glass and expands the option list for the SL FWD to include Leather and Moonroof Packages.

BEST BUY: New standards and enhanced upgrade possibilities make the SL an even more attractive value for 2010.

SUM UP: BECAUSE A LEXUS RX IS BORING.  ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.5L/265-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, CVT
0-60 MPH	7.2 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500/1091-1246 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18/23 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

* estimated



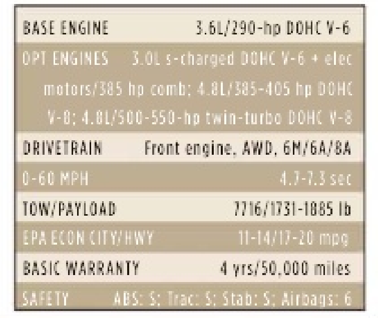
Porsche Cayenne

BASE PRICE RANGE: $46,315-$127,115 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Last year Porsche gave us the Turbo S, this year it's the S Hybrid. It's powered by a supercharged Audi 3.0L V-6 mated to a three-phase electric motor that can move the SUV from 60 in 6.8 seconds while emitting 20-percent-less CO_2 than similarly powered vehicles. Parallel full-hybrid design is joined to an 8A.

COOL FACT: The parallel full-hybrid design enables the Hybrid to drive up to 1.2 miles on electric power alone.

SUM UP: SUV HYBRID FOR THE ELITE. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	3.6L/290-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINES	3.0L s-charged DOHC V-6 + elec motors/385 hp comb; 4.8L/385-405 hp DOHC V-8; 4.8L/500-550-hp twin-turbo DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6M/6A/8A
0-60 MPH	4.7-7.3 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	7716/1731-1885 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	11-14/17-20 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Saab 9-4X (2011)

BASE PRICE: $31,500* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Saab is Swedish again, thanks to new owner Koenigsegg Group AB, a consortium led by Koenigsegg Automotive AB, with GM agreeing to provide powertrain and architecture for a specific time period. In light of the changes, the 9-4X's launch may be delayed until late 2010/early 2011.

COOL FACT: According to Saab, the 9-4X is expected to be produced in Mexico under Saab's direction.

SUM UP: SAAB'S SAVIOR? MAYBE. (NOT RATED)

BASE ENGINE	2.0L/300-hp turbo DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINES	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.9 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	N/A
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	24 mpg (comb)*
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Saturn Outlook

BASE PRICE RANGE: $31,500-$37,300* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: A new owner. Even though Penske Corp.'s purchase of Saturn will be finalized this fall, GM will continue to produce the Outlook until 2011, giving Penske enough time to arrange a new production source, since the owner will not manufacture cars directly. As such, the 2010 Outlook lineup should remain the same as 2009's.

COOL FACT: Near the top of Penske's source list is Renault Samsung, which produces, among other vehicles, the stylish SM3 compact.

SUM UP: NEW OWNER, SAME RIG. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.6L/281-288 hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	8.1-8.4 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	5200/1493-1698 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-17/23-24 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



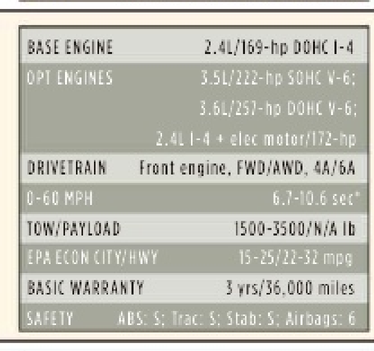
Saturn Vue

BASE PRICE RANGE: $24,100-$30,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: As with the Outlook, GM will continue to produce the Vue until 2011, at which time Penske will switch over to a new manufacturer. The anticipated plug-in hybrid version will not be produced as a Saturn and could revert to another GM brand. Until the details are hammered out, the Vue rolls into 2010 relatively unchanged.

BEST BUY: The Vue Hybrid offers excellent mileage at an affordable price, as well as good looks and a well-equipped package.

SUM UP: SEE ABOVE. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.4L/169-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINES	3.5L/222-hp SOHC V-6; 3.6L/257-hp DOHC V-6; 2.4L I-4 + elec motor/172-hp
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 4A/6A
0-60 MPH	6.7-10.6 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-3500/N/A lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-25/22-32 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6



Subaru Forester

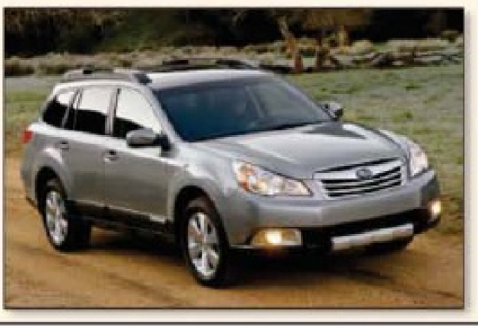
BASE PRICE RANGE: $20,990-$29,190 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Modest changes for Subaru's compact AWD SUV, which offers a host of repackaged/renamed Premium and Limited variations in 2.5X and turbocharged 2.5XT forms. Restyled instrument cluster while the 2.5X Premium and all Limiteds add a 10-way power driver's seat. Nav-equipped models now come with Bluetooth connectivity.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: The turbo XT Premium brings WRX power, nets upgraded standards, and offers an optional navigation system.

SUM UP: FEISTY, FUN, CAPABLE, AND CHARMING. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.5L/170-hp SOHC flat-4
OPT ENGINE	2.5L/224-hp turbo DOHC flat-4
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 5M/4A
0-60 MPH	6.6-9.9 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	2400/1180 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	19-20/24-26 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Subaru Outback

BASE PRICE RANGE: $23,690-$31,690 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Completely redesigned, but sharing much of its structure/mechanicals and AWD with the also-new Legacy, the 2010 Outback (2.5i/3.6R in base/Premium/Limited) offers more style, space, comfort, and performance. Upgraded powertrains pair a revised 170-hp/2.5L four with a new 6M or CVT and a new 256-hp/3.6L six with a revamped 5A.

BEST BUY: A 2.5i Premium with optional Sport-mode CVT delivers respectable acceleration as well as the Outback's best mpg numbers.

SUM UP: CROSSING OVER FROM THE OTHER SIDE. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.5L/170-hp SOHC flat-4
OPT ENGINE	3.6L/256-hp DOHC flat-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6M/5A/CVT
0-60 MPH	6.8-8.7 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	2400/1180 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18-22/25-29 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

* estimated

BASE ENGINE	3.6L/256-hp DOHC flat-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	8.2 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	2000-3500/1157 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16/21 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Subaru Tribeca

BASE PRICE RANGE: $32,000-$34,750* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Back in standard/Limited trims—now with seating for seven—gets minor exterior trim/headlamp tweaks and a standard rear A/C unit with dedicated outlets plus reclining second-row seatbacks. The Limited also adds XM Satellite Radio, Bluetooth, and a backup camera and offers new Navigation, Touring, and Moonroof Packages.

COOL FACT: The Tribeca boasts Subaru's most sophisticated AWD system and earns top overall safety ratings from NHTSA and the IIHS.

SUM UP: HIGH UTILITY, LOW VISIBILITY. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.5L/152-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	4.0L/261-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 5M/5A
0-60 MPH	7.5-10.2 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500-6500/883-1471 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	15-19/19-23 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: O; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Suzuki Equator

BASE PRICE RANGE: $18,200-$31,500* BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: A new arrival in Suzuki's 2009 lineup, the compact Equator (base/Premium/Sport/RMZ-4) rolls into 2010 unchanged, save for a new nav option on the Crew Cab Sport. Based on Nissan's well-proven Frontier, the Suzuki incarnation brings unique styling tweaks and is available in Extended Cab (RWD) and Crew Cab (RWD/AWD), with I-4/V-6 power.

COOL FACT: The Crew Cab RMZ-4 gets Dana 44 axles, electric rear locking diff, Bilstein shocks, skidplates, and BFG Rugged Trail P265/75R16 tires.

SUM UP: NICE VARIATION ON A SOLID THEME. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.4L/166-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	3.2L/230-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/AWD, 5M/4A/5A
0-60 MPH	9.5-10.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	3000/992-1178 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-19/23-26 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Suzuki Grand Vitara

BASE PRICE RANGE: $20,000-$27,800* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Following major upgrades to its I-4/V-6 powertrains for 2009, the compact five-seat Grand Vitara (base/Premium/XSport/Luxury) adds Garmin nav and Bluetooth to its 2010 standards roster. It also gains an AWD-only Special Edition that slots between the Premium and XSport and brings alloy wheels, a six-disc CD changer, and more.

COOL FACT: Nav setup in all but the base/Premium trims includes MSN "suite" with real-time traffic, gas pricing, Doppler weather, and more.

SUM UP: STILL CHASING ITS COMPETITION. ★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.7L/160-hp DOHC I-4*
OPT ENGINE	4.0L/270-hp DOHC V-6*
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 4A/5A*
0-60 MPH	7.5-9.5 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	5000-7000/1200-1500 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18-20/22-24 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles*
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Toyota 4Runner

BASE PRICE RANGE: $30,000-$40,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: All new for 2010, the more boldly styled Gen V 4Runner is taller, wider, and longer than before. With seating for five or seven, it's available in SR5, Limited, and off-road-spec Trail trims, offers RWD and part- or full-time 4WD, and is powered by Toyota's 2.7L I-4 or a more potent variant of the existing 4.0L V-6.

COOL FACT: The upgraded 4.0L V-6 gets better mpg than the previous 4Runner's 4.7L V-8 while delivering similar performance levels.

SUM UP: FOLLOWS THE FORMULA. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	4.0L/258-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 6M/5A
0-60 MPH	7.2-7.6 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	5000/1272-1285 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14-16/18-20 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

Toyota FJ Cruiser

BASE PRICE RANGE: $24,480-$26,070 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Dual VVT-i and roller rockers add 19 hp to the FJ's 4.0L V-6, which now gets better mpg and drinks regular gas. A new Special Edition brings unique cosmetics, functional go-anywhere items (Bilstein Shocks, skidplates, A-Trac, locking diff, BFG all-terrain tires, TRD wheels), and comfort/convenience touches (Garmin Portable nav, AC/DC outlets).

BEST BUY: Boonie bounders will love the Special Edition; street types should consider RWD with the Convenience or Upgrade II Packages.

SUM UP: A RARE THING: A TOYOTA WITH PASSION. ★★★★



BASE ENGINE	2.7L/187-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINES	3.5L/270-hp DOHC V-6; 3.3L DOHC V-6 + elec motor/270 hp comb
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5A/CVT
0-60 MPH	6.8-8.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	2000-5000/1359-1822 lb*
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	17-27/23-25 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 7

Toyota Highlander

BASE PRICE RANGE: $26,505-$41,280 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Modest tweaks, but carryover prices for Toyota's popular midsize SUV that offers carlike ride/comfort, 5/7-place seating, the choice of I-4/V-6 power, and FWD/AWD in base/Sport/Limited trims. Buyers can now add a moonroof to the base four-cylinder or get a backup monitor on the base V-6. The AWD-only Highlander Hybrid carries over intact.

BEST BUY: Many will find a nicely optioned I-4 Sport—consider the JBL sound system, with/without navigation and rear A/C—their top deal.

SUM UP: ALL THE SUV MOST PEOPLE NEED. ★★★★



* estimated



Toyota Land Cruiser

BASE PRICE: $66,200* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Minor enhancements bring rear-hatch privacy glass as well as audio upgrades that include XM Satellite Radio (90 days free), Bluetooth, aux/USB inputs, and Toyota's Safety Connect service. Optional navigation system gains XM real-time traffic feature while Upgrade Package gets rain-sensing wipers.

COOL FACT: Land Cruiser's adventurous character is underpinned by a locking center diff, dual-range transfer case, and adjustable suspension.

SUM UP: UNSTOPPABLE, UNBEATABLE, UNASSUMING. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	5.7L/381-hp DOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, 4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	6.5 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	8500/1585 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13/18 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 10



Toyota RAV4

BASE PRICE RANGE: $22,380-$28,610 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: While its price, I-4/V-6 power, FWD/AWD, and 5/7-place seating don't change, compact RAV4 (base/Sport/Limited) adds a JBL audio/Bluetooth/steering wheel controls option for the Sport model and makes the Sport Appearance Package available on the I-4 FWD Sport. Base model offers a rearview-mirror-mounted backup monitor.

BEST BUY: RAV4 Sport in FWD or AWD matches the best handling with the most cost-effective combo of standards and available options.

SUM UP: SMART SIZE, SMART PRICE, SMART BUY. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.5L/179-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	3.5L/268-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 4A/5A
0-60 MPH	6.3-8.4 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	1500-3500/955-1370 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	19-22/26-28 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Toyota Sequoia

BASE PRICE RANGE: $39,330-$59,705 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: More standards and fewer options for the 2010 full-size SUV (SR5/Limited/Platinum). All add front knee airbags and Bluetooth/USB/iPod capability and become satellite radio-ready. The SR5 gets the new, more powerful/frugal 4.6L iForce V-8, the Limited adds a power rear liftgate, and the Platinum gains laser cruise control.

COOL FACT: SR5's new 4.6L i-Force V-8 makes 310 hp—34 more than the previous 4.7L—but bumps highway mileage of the RWD model by 2 mpg.

SUM UP: THINK LAND CRUISER LITE. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	4.6L/310-hp DOHC V-8
OPT ENGINE	5.7L/381-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 6A
0-60 MPH	6.2-8.9 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	7100-10,000/7000-7300 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-14/16-19 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 8



Toyota Sienna

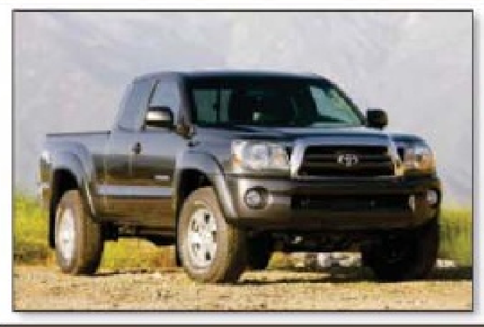
BASE PRICE RANGE: $25,340-$38,665 BODY TYPE: Minivan

WHAT'S NEW: Nothing new for the 2010 Sienna (CE/LE/XLE/XLE Limited)—including its price that also remains in 2009 trim. All versions of Toyota's personable people mover feature a responsive 265-hp V-6, smooth-shifting 5A, and the comprehensive STAR safety system. Three top trims offering category-exclusive optional AWD as well as baseline FWD.

COOL FACT: Sienna AWD models come with larger 225/60 run-flat tires, 17-in. alloys, daytime running lights, and windshield-wiper deicers.

SUM UP: A MINIVAN WITH MAXI COMFORTS. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	3.5L/265-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 5A
0-60 MPH	8.0-9.5 sec*
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	7-8/3rd row
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-17/21-23 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6



Toyota Tacoma

BASE PRICE RANGE: $15,970-$27,875 BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: No changes—price included—for the 2010 version of Toyota's compact pickup. Variations run from standard/Access/Double Cabs and I-4/V-6 engines to short/long beds and RWD/dual-range 4WD configurations—all with the comprehensive STAR safety system. Also returning are the street-chic X-Runner and the off-road-look PreRunner.

COOL FACT: Tacoma buyers can choose to add either a TRD Sport or TRD Off-Road Package, with or without premium JBL audio systems.

SUM UP: STILL MVP IN THE COMPACT PICKUP LEAGUE. ★★★★★

BASE ENGINE	2.7L/159-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	4.0L/236-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD,5M/6M/4A/5A
0-60 MPH	7.8-11.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	3500-6500/910-1570 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14-20/19-26 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 2



Toyota Tundra

BASE PRICE RANGE: $23,955-$42,955 BODY TYPE: Pickup

WHAT'S NEW: Beyond minor trim tweaks, Toyota's full-size Tundra (base/SR5/Limited) gets a host of meaningful functional upgrades starting with a new, more potent/efficient 310-hp/4.6-liter iForce V-8 and driver/passenger knee airbags. Its even wider-ranging 2010 mix also includes enhanced audio system options and Work Truck and Platinum Packages.

COOL FACT: Although corralling 34 extra horses, the Tundra's new 4.6L iForce V-8 is smaller and almost 100 lb lighter than the outgoing 4.7L.

SUM UP: DOES BIG WELL, JUST NOT BEST. ★★★★

BASE ENGINE	4.0L/236-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINES	4.6L/310-hp DOHC V-8; 5.7L/381-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, RWD/4WD, 5A/6A
0-60 MPH	6.0-9.0 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	5000-10,800/1350-1990 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-15/16-19 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 8

* estimated

Toyota Venza

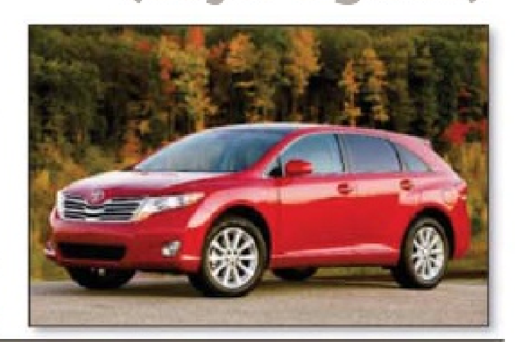
BASE ENGINE	2.7L/182-hp DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	3.5L/268-hp DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	6.5-9.1 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	2500-3500/1200-1225 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18-21/25-29 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

BASE PRICE RANGE: $26,900-$30,300* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Unchanged, save for adding a USB port, iPod connectivity, and Bluetooth on all models. This versatile five-seat transporter offers I-4/V-6 power and FWD/AWD choices, an impressive array of comfort/convenience/safety standards, and a plethora of personalization options/packages.

COOL FACT: Despite its easy-going personality, the Venza can hold 70.1 cu ft of cargo with its rear seat flipped down and tow up to 3500 lb.

SUM UP: TOYOTA SAYS IT'S A CAR. IT AIN'T. ★★★★



Volkswagen Routan

BASE ENGINE	3.8L/197-hp OHV V-6
OPT ENGINE	4.0L/253-hp SOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.8-10.3 sec
SEATS/FOLDAWAY	7/3rd row
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-17/23-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 4

BASE PRICE RANGE: $26,200-34,500* BODY TYPE: Minivan

WHAT'S NEW: The Routan heads into its sophomore year with a complete change up in trim levels. Taking a page from Honda, there are now several trim levels packaged with options (S, SE, SE w/RSE, SE w/Nav+RSE, SEL w/Nav, SEL w/Nav+RSE, and SEL Premium w/Nav+RSE). All the levels improve their offerings, with Bluetooth now standard on all but the S.



COOL FACT: The name Routan is a play on Touran, the name of Volkswagen's small van sold around the world.

SUM UP: A MODERN MICROBUS, BUT NOT AS COOL. ★★★★



Volkswagen Tiguan

BASE ENGINE	2.0L/200-hp turbo DOHC I-4
OPT ENGINE	None
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6M/6A
0-60 MPH	7.5-8.2 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	2200/1330-1352 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	18-19/24-26 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

BASE PRICE RANGE: $24,200-$33,800* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: Introduced last year, the diminutive yet sporty SUV heads into 2010 relatively unchanged, the most notable difference being a new instrument cluster. Bluetooth is now standard on the SE and SEL trim levels, and the Premium VIII radio w/touchscreen replaces the outgoing VII version. In addition, MDI w/iPod cable is now only available in the Nav package.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: 6M and front drive for light weight and full control.

SUM UP: ENTRY-LEVEL EURO LUX. ★★★★



Volkswagen Touareg 2

BASE ENGINE	3.6L/280-hp DOHC V-6
OPT ENGINE	3.0L/221-hp t-diesel DOHC V-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.9-8.3 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	7716/1325-1400 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	14-17/20-25 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Trac: S; Stab: S; Airbags: 6

BASE PRICE RANGE: $40,500-$44,000* BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: The V-8 FSI follows the V-10 TDI out the door, leaving the stalwart V-6 and its late-cycle-launch V-6 TDI as the lineup's two offerings for 2010. The V-6s have minimal changes with "walnut" wood interior trim and Bluetooth High Speed now standard. In addition three of the option packages, Luxury, Technology, and Premium Technology, gain content.

DRIVER'S CHOICE: The V-6 TDI, of course, for the best of both worlds: off-the-line grunt and decent gas mileage.

SUM UP: TOUAREG + DIESEL = PERFECT MATCH. ★★★★



Volvo XC60

BASE ENGINE	3.2L/235-hp DOHC I-6
OPT ENGINE	3.0L/281-hp turbo DOHC I-6
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	6.8-8.2 sec*
TOW/PAYLOAD	3300/1194-1356 lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	16-18 /22-27 mpg*
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

BASE PRICE RANGE: $33,245-$38,050 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: A dynamic, fun, exceptionally stylish, small premium SUV, the XC60 comes in two satisfying flavors, 3.2 and T6 AWD, both loaded with class-leading safety systems, as well as lux and techno-gadget appointments. In addition, the two-row, five-seat SUV boasts an impressive 9.1 in. of ground clearance for a variety of crossover adventures.

COOL FACT: City Safety, a driver support system, precharges the brakes or automatically brakes the XC60 to avoid or lessen a rear-end collision.

SUM UP: STYLEMEISTER OF THE SEGMENT. ★★★★



Volvo XC90

BASE ENGINE	3.2L/235-hp DOHC I-6
OPT ENGINE	4.4L/311-hp DOHC V-8
DRIVETRAIN	Front engine, FWD/AWD, 6A
0-60 MPH	7.6-8.9 sec
TOW/PAYLOAD	3970-4960/N/A lb
EPA ECON CITY/HWY	13-14/19-20 mpg
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
SAFETY	ABS: S; Stab: S; Trac: S; Airbags: 6

BASE PRICE RANGE: $38,550-$48,900 BODY TYPE: SUV

WHAT'S NEW: V-8 R-Design joins its departed V-8 Sport stablemate in the discontinued bin for 2010, while the remaining three model offerings (3.2, 3.2 R-Design, and V-8) receive new lux equipment as standard.

COOL FACT: The Multimedia package includes a premium sound system with Dolby Pro-Logic II Surround Sound, a 650-watt amp, 12 speakers, Sirius radio, and nav with Real Time Traffic.



SUM UP: AGING GRACEFULLY. ★★★★



* estimated

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LOT NO. 95659

U.S. GENERAL

$99.99 REG. PRICE $199.99

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SUPER COUPON!

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$16.99

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SAVE 43%

98166895

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LOT NO. 92623

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$29.99

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SAVE 60%

$9.99

REG. PRICE $24.99



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bella voce

Want to understand an emotive, Italian auto? Just listen

WE FIRST drove the rare, expensive, sonorous-sounding 8C Competizione coupe in late 2007, and track-tested one just a few months ago. We've now had a crack at the open-topped version, and we're pleased to report it's more of the same, just *al fresco*. Carbon-fiber bodywork bolts and bonds to a steel and aluminum tubular chassis. There's additional bracing to compensate for the structural strength given up by the loss of its lid. While structural rigidity suffers by nearly 30 percent, the coupe was so strong to begin with that the Spider is a mostly body-wiggle-free machine. Alfa bagged the notion of a retractable hardtop in favor of the more coachbuilt nature of a rich-looking soft top. Weight goes up about 200 pounds.

Underhood is the Ferrari-designed-and-built 4.7-liter V-8 offered in all current Maseratis, backed by the same six-speed autoclutch manual transaxle.



Power is 450-horses at 7000 revs, its 354-pound-fot torque peak shows up at 4750, and redline is 7500 rpm. The biggest functional difference is that the Spider gets standard carbon-ceramic brake rotors, which were not available on the coupe. The cabin is a dazzling smorgasbord of sexy-yet-functional materials.

The 8C Spider isn't a "numbers" car. It's plenty fast, but Ferrari 430 Scuderia or Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4 will run away and hide. Its performance is still impressive, and it's a handler too. The well-worn 8C Competizione coupe we tested ran 0 to 60 in 4.6 seconds, cornered at 0.94 g, and braked from 60 to 0 in 101 feet. A fresh Spider on good tires will be within a pinch and an inch of these numbers.

What sets this *macchina Italiana magica* apart is the fact that its performance is so easily accessible. You won't need to fold yourself into an inhospitable cabin, leave your luggage at home, or be beaten to death by a rock-hard suspension. This is a car you cannot only drive 500 miles a day on your favorite ocean/mountain/deserted road, but you'll want to. The big disappointment is that it doesn't have the latest seven-speed dual autoclutch transaxle of a (less expensive) Ferrari California. Alfa will bring only 35 made-to-order 8C Spiders to the U.S., so it will be a rare and lucky club that owns them. ■ **matt stone**

2010 ALFA ROMEO 8C SPIDER	
BASE PRICE	$299,000
VEHICLE LAYOUT	Front engine, RWD, 2-pass, 2-door conv
ENGINE	4.7L/450-hp/ 354-lb-ft DOHC 32-valve V-8
TRANSMISSION	6-speed auto-cl man
CURB WEIGHT	3550 lb (mfr)
WHEELBASE	104.1 in
LENGTH x WIDTH x HEIGHT	172.5 x 74.6 x 53.9 in
0-60 MPH	4.6 (mfr est)
EPA CITY/HWY FUEL ECON	Not yet rated
ON SALE IN U.S.	Fall 2009

words **mike floyd**


WILLIAM WALKER

2009 Audi A4 Avant 2.0T quattro

Hip to be square?

YOU'VE GOT to give it up to the Germans. No matter how out of fashion the wagon has become in this crossover-crazy land of ours, they keep bringing them over. So we figured, what the heck, instead of testing out Audi's new A4 in sedan form, we'd add the 2009 Audi A4 Avant 2.0T quattro Tiptronic (say that five times fast) to our long-term fleet. Is it hip to be square? We're going to find out.

Looking at the numbers, it's a virtual dead heat at the dragstrip between the Avant and a similarly equipped 2009 A4 sedan we tested last year. Audi's 211-horse, 2.0-liter turbo is as stout a four-banger as they come and boogies the Avant to 60 in 6.4 seconds and on to a 14.9-second quarter mile at 90.8 mph (the sedan hit 60 in 6.5 seconds and the quarter in 15 flat at 92 mph). Ah, but the wagon has way more cargo room, you say? Not exactly. The A4 sedan's trunk holds 16.9 cubic feet, just 0.4 less than the Avant with the rear seats up. As you'd expect, the Avant wins hands down with the seats folded (50.5 versus 34.0), and of course, its hatch makes loading cargo easier.

You'll pay more for the added room though, as the Avant's base price is roughly four grand more than the sedan's. Our tester, which started at $35,675, got the kitchen-sink treatment, with the $7850 Prestige package featuring an assortment of upscale touches including Bluetooth, a Bang & Olufsen sound system, power tailgate, and Xenon headlamps. For $2500 we also checked off the navigation option with backup camera that integrates with Audi's slick Multi Media Interface system.

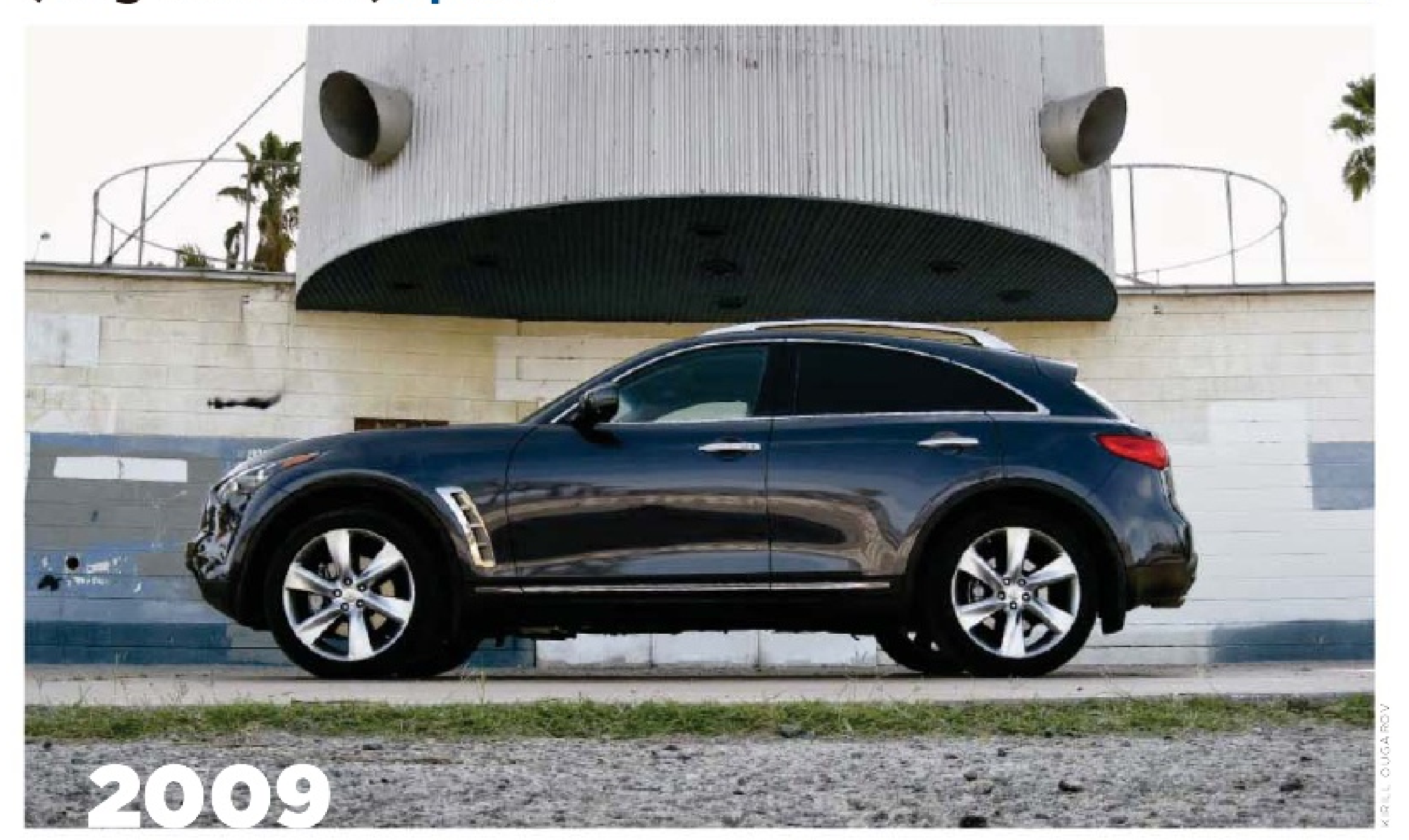
Bringing both bling and grip to the Avant is the S line package, which for $2450 adds a sport tuned suspension, 19-inch rims shod with high-performance summer rubber, steering-wheel-mounted shift paddles, and several interior and exterior trim bits–including some sweet, black Alcantara-leather-swathed buckets. We also opted for the Audi Drive Select feature ($2500), which allows the driver to choose several vehicle setups from comfort to sport. The upgrades helped the Avant pull a very respectable 0.93 g on the skidpad and buzz through our figure-eight course in 26.3 seconds at 0.66 g.

So the Avant can carry the mail and canyon carve all the way home–it's a formula all those cool crossovers aspire to, but only unhip wagons can really pull off. Yep, we're looking forward to our year of being square. ■

our vehicle

Base price	$35,675
Price as tested	$52,250
Vehicle layout	Front engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door wagon
Engine	2.0L/211-hp/258-lb-ft turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Curb weight (dist f/r)	3932 lb (53/47%)
Wheelbase	110.6 in
Length x width x height	185.2 x 71.9 x 56.5 in
0-60 mph	6.4 sec
Quarter mile	14.9 sec @ 90.8 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	102 ft
Lateral accel	0.93 g (avg)
MT figure eight	26.3 sec @ 0.66 g (avg)
EPA city/hwy econ	21/27 mpg
CO_2 emissions	0.92 lb/mile
Total mileage	9642 miles
Average fuel economy	21.1 mpg

words ron kiino


KIRILL OUGAROV

2009 Infiniti FX50 S

Vroom with a view

"I GOT a chance to take the FX on a ride up to Sacramento to watch some rowing races," says assistant Web producer Nate Martinez, "and it proved a comfortable long-hauler. Like my four passengers, I most enjoyed the well-put-together cabin, with its soft, somewhat worn leather, easy-to-use navigation, and clean-sounding stereo system." Martinez, who has an eye for detail, wasn't missing the FX's. "The Infiniti's intricate interior details are worth noting. The clock, although a brand staple, is a bit too old-school for my taste and seems contrary to the overall modern styling. The stitching in the leather is nice for a car in this class, as are the individual LED lights in each door handle. Dash layout, with its buttons and knobs, is comfortable and within reach of front passenger and driver. Best feature of all: the Around View camera. I've never backed up into so many parking spots—for no apparent reason—as I have with this car."

Martinez also appreciated the FX's lane-departure warning system ("I expected a simple beeping to go off once I swerved off course, but was happily surprised when I felt a slight brake and tug of the wheel in the opposite direction."), but the radar cruise control "was at times too imposing. A system with a 'radar off' button would be ideal." Overall, Martinez enjoyed his time in the Infiniti, once he grew accustomed to the driving experience. "The FX takes a little while to get used to due to its size. The front shoulders, like those on the GT-R and the Maxima, are clearly visible from the driver's seat and can throw off cornering and lane-placement judgment. Smooth throttle tip-in, too, takes some time to master. I felt bad for my friends whose heads rocked back into their respective headrests at nearly every stoplight."

"There's not enough rear legroom," adds Martinez. "Even my girlfriend, who is a tad over five feet, complained about the dismal back seat space. The same can't be said of the cargo area, though. We packed in lots of bags, folding chairs, and other tidbits with ease."

BRIAN VANCE

- **Months/miles in service** 11/24,573
- **Avg econ/CO_2** 17.0 mpg/1.14 lb/mi
- **Unresolved problems** None
- **Maintenance cost** $764.99 (3 - oil change/inspection/rotate tires, replace engine and cabin air filters)
- **Normal-wear cost** $0


WILLIAM WALKER

2009 MINI JCW CLUBMAN

AT AROUND 17,000 miles, the Mini's OE Continental run-flat tires were showing exposed wear bars, so we replaced them with a set of Michelin's new Primacy HP ZP run-flats. Total cost, including installation, was a healthy $993.87. Wearing fresh shoes, the Mini had little trouble impressing *Truck Trend* Web producer Melissa Spiering. "The Clubman's third door made it easy to take my two-year-old nephew to daycare and when I had to pile friends into the back seat. I was also impressed that I was able to rake in 437 miles on a tank of gas, especially considering my occasional lead foot and three-hour daily commute)." Nits? "The lack of an armrest left me hanging, and I fumbled with the radio on a regular basis."

- **Months/miles in service** 13/18,692
- **Avg econ/CO_2** 26.6 mpg/0.73 lb/mi
- **Unresolved problems** None
- **Maintenance cost** $0 (oil change/ inspection/rotate tires/replace cabin air filter)
- **Normal-wear cost** $993.87 (replace tires)


WILLIAM WALKER

2009 BMW 335D

EDITOR at large Arthur St. Antoine was at the 335d's wheel when an oblivious driver of a Volkswagen Jetta, going about 30 mph, rear-ended the Bimmer at a stoplight. "The 335d took the impact remarkably well," notes St. Antoine. "It was still driveable, and the rear glass was intact. The kid's Jetta, the lighter of the two vehicles, didn't fare so well. The entire front end had stepped backward a few inches, the hood was folded, and the radiator was likely damaged." As St. Antoine has stated, the 335d, which would later be repaired for around $3500, was still driveable, so our staff continued to rack up the miles. "After Art's misadventure a few weeks ago," logs associate Web producer Rory Jurnecka, "the car still feels remarkably solid, and I can't believe how little damage was done to the car. It still rides and drives just fine."

- **Months/miles in service** 7/11,613
- **Avg econ/CO_2** 27.8 mpg/0.80 lb/mi
- **Unresolved problems** None
- **Maintenance cost** $0
- **Normal-wear cost** $0





JULIA LAPALME

2009 HYUNDAI GENESIS 4.6

WHILE MANY luxury cars subject their owners to pricey maintenance costs, the Genesis 4.6, thus far, has been downright thrifty: only $46.87 for a 7500-mile oil change, full inspection, and tire rotation. "To call the Genesis 'the best Hyundai ever' wouldn't be at all unreasonable," states associate Web producer Kirill Ougarov. "Aside from hard plastics in areas that will rarely be felt by the occupants—a cost-cutting measure but hardly the worst offense in the industry—the interior is filled with comfortable, quality materials. The center interface works well and is no iDrive, though the knob is almost the same diameter as a Big Gulp. Besides the interior, the big V-8 provides plenty of grunt and a properly subdued soundtrack for a car that can be called an E-Class for C-Class money."

- **Months/miles in service** 7/10,684
- **Avg econ/CO_2** 18.8 mpg/1.03 lb/mi
- **Unresolved problems** None
- **Maintenance cost** $42.87 (oil change/inspection/rotate tires)
- **Normal-wear cost** $0



JULIA LAPALME

2009 VOLKSWAGEN JETTA TDI

AT 20,000 miles, our long-term Jetta TDI needed new brake pads, per the service techs at Neftin VW in Thousand Oaks, California. VW recommends replacement when there is 4 mm of remaining wear in the pads, which measure 11 mm when new. Cost for the fresh pads was $158.09. The second service—an oil change, full inspection, tire rotation, and cabin air filter replacement—was free, part of VW's 3-year/36,000-mile no-cost maintenance. "Gone are the days of my dad's clunky, smoky, and slow 1983 Mercedes 300TD," says Martinez. "This diesel is as smooth and quiet as any gas- drinking car. It feels quicker than most too. Thanks to its torque curve, I frequently chirped tires without much enticement of the skinny pedal."

- **Months/miles in service** 11/21,718
- **Avg econ/CO_2** 35.1 mpg/0.63 lb/mi
- **Unresolved problems** None
- **Maintenance cost** $0 (2 - oil change/inspection/rotate tires, replace cabin air filter)
- **Normal-wear cost** $158.09 (replace rear brake pads)


JULIA LAPALME

2009 FORD F-150

AFTER 15,000 miles had accrued on the odo, the F-150 made its second service visit, a $49.71 oil change, full inspection, and tire rotation. With fresh oil running through its V-8 veins, the F-150 hauled managing editor Rusty Kurtz to Laughlin, Nevada, for some jet-skiing fun. "The F-150's backup camera made hooking up the jet-ski trailer a breeze. That said, the backup sensors were another story: Their constant beeping while backing down the boat ramp was unnerving. You can turn the sensors off by toggling through a menu with a button on the dash; however, it must be done while the vehicle is in park. A busy boat ramp is not the place to do this. The sensors will automatically reset to the On position each time the vehicle is started. I'd forget about that until it was my turn to back down the ramp—too late to stop and toggle through the menu again."

- **Months/miles in service** 8/15,733
- **Avg econ/CO_2** 15.0 mpg/1.29 lb/mi
- **Unresolved problems** None
- **Maintenance cost** $97.92 (2 - oil change/ inspection/rotate tires)
- **Normal-wear cost** $0


BRIAN VANCE

2009 ACURA TL SH-AWD

"I LIKE the use of materials inside," opines assistant Web producer Carlos Lago. "Everything's comfortable and easy to the touch, which is a good thing because you have to touch a lot—there are many buttons and menus." Lago did have a less than favorable experience with the TL's Bluetooth. "I experienced nothing but frustration with the system," he notes. "It wouldn't auto-connect to my phone after engine restart, causing me to delve into a submenu to force a connection. Even when connected, calling someone on the phone reverts the Bluetooth to handset instead of sending sound through the speakers. Multiple people I talked to complained about the sound quality and preferred I talk over speakerphone. (As an almost redeemable plus, you can use the nav system while moving. Thank you, Acura!)" ■

- **Months/miles in service** 7/13,387
- **Avg econ/CO_2** 19.9 mpg/0.97 lb/mi
- **Unresolved problems** None
- **Maintenance cost** $92.26 (oil change/ inspection/rotate tires)
- **Normal-wear cost** $0

words **kim reynolds**



JESSICA GERMILLER

Chrysler Town & Country Ltd.

The inventor of the minivan is still ironing out wrinkles

"AH, I STILL DON'T hear anything, sir," offered the polite technician from Orange Coast Jeep/Chrysler in Costa Mesa. We were heading back down the 405 freeway again, me at the wheel, trying to reproduce a frightful aerodynamic howl that had recently cropped up along a breezy desert stretch during a cross-country vacation. But, of course, no matter what I did (sorry about that, big-rig), the banshee wail was being coy today—and was that technician giving me doubtful side glances, or was I just imagining things?

Oh, well, perhaps it was better to not add any more to our Chrysler Town & Country minivan's swelling list of heavily documented miseries. On its third visit to the dealer (at a still-new-smelling 19,404 miles), we had staggered out with a bill for $879.13 (including tax) to replace the front brakes and flush the brake fluid ($615), service the transmission ($153), swap in new filters, change the oil, and various other whatnots ($72). And that's what we paid for; the warranty took the hit for a replaced, leaking radiator (a leaking radiator?).

Okay, so this was an atypical spike in its service cost history, as the bill for its first dealer visit was scot-free, and the second was a digestible $190.07. But even here, in retrospect, dark clouds were forming: Besides a clogged A/C filter and the usual service necessities, a brake inspection was deemed necessary—as was a new radiator cap. In addition, the software for the MyGIGRadio system was updated under warranty. Later, during the T&C's fourth and final scheduled service with us, the long-suffering warranty also ponied up for a power-steering hose and yet another radiator cap, though the radiator count remained at two. And just prior to return, the always-dicey, electrically folding third-row seat finally jammed up completely, though frankly, its correct operation was a bit of an on-going mystery. A tidbit from the notebook: "Had an episode where a piece of luggage accidentally hit the 'close' button on the side pillar and it tried to crush a passenger belted into the seat." Ideal for James Bond, perhaps—"Goldfinger, I have the perfect place for you to ride"—but a rude way to treat the Purple Stars girls soccer team.

So, as they say, other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you enjoy the play? Believe it or not, we actually liked it nevertheless.

If you scrape away the layers of creature-comfort content Chrysler has festooned it with, the Town & Country's foundation is genuinely likable. There's power aplenty from the 4.0-liter, 251-horse V-6, it steers without complaint, and the ride is cushy. And, of course, the staggering utility of such a rolling storage shed/seven-seat people-hauler/go-anywhere-vacation mothership is unapproachable by even the most clever of new-gen crossovers. Say what you will, but I'm proudly cuckoo for minivans. Including this one.

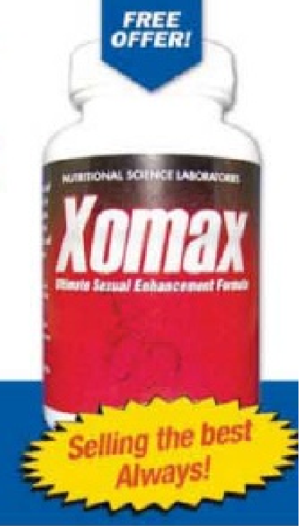
our car

Base price	$37,345
Options	Dual DVD w/Sirius backseat TV ($2020), MyGIG multimedia system w/Nav & Sirius traffic ($1300), pwr folding 3rd-row seat ($595), Inferno Red paint ($225)
MSRP, as tested	$41,485
Total mileage	32,244
Avg fuel economy	18.9 mpg
Problem areas	Brake wear, radiator, pwr steering hose, pwr 3rd-row seat, rattles
Maintenance cost	$299.56
Normal-wear cost	$864.98
Three-year residual value*	$15,026*
Recalls	None

* Automotive Lease Guide

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(long-term test) verdict



JESSICA GERMILLER

What's perplexing is how so many of our Town & Country's multitude of promising features wind up undermined by compromised execution. We've touched on the conceptually excellent Stow 'N Go seats already. But its dazzling double DVD screen, multi-bin overhead console also was a non-stop rattlefest. On one long drive, while the kids sat transfixed by "Mary Poppins," I spent about an hour patroling its various rattle epicenters, silencing them one by one with squashed Power Bars (gradually replaced by folded bits of the *L.A. Times* as we became hungrier and the paper got read).

A dire consequence of the in-the-floor-stowing Stow 'N Go seats is that the spare tire (a space saver) has wound up under the front row's floor, along the van's centerline. So…on a rainy night (these things always happen on rainy nights, right?), I suddenly saw tire-pressure numbers for the left rear rapidly dropping. Fortunately, I was able to skedaddle back to our (dimly) lit garage to change wheels, but, ahh, it's not so simple. The spare has to be lowered by a creaky crank, and after it finally completes its descent to the concrete, then what? If you're me, you lay on the ground and kick the spare like mad to maneuver it into a reachable location (our Paleolithic ancestors would have used a found tool, like a stick, but my first choice is to kick things). All very amusing in retrospect, but what if I hadn't managed to limp to a dry, (dimly) lighted location? On the other hand, the importance of tire-pressure monitoring that instantly shows you exactly which tire is deflating and how quickly its pressure is dropping is worth any number of Stow-'N-whatever option boxes. Ten minutes later I would've been doing 75 mph on the freeway. In the rain.

When we introduced this Town & Country to you in our August 2008 issue, we concluded by asking: "So, will its durability and dense concentration of creature comforts keep us giddy 12 months from now?" Answer: The giddy is gone. While—at least conceptually—we applaud its numerous clever features, too much about their execution leaves plenty to be desired. ■

from the logbook

I was impressed with the ease with which you can reconfigure the cabin. I needed the full flat cargo space, and had it in no time. The van held a lot of gear—it didn't seem like that much when I stowed it all in there, but taking it out took several trips!
■ Allyson Harwood

Despite being somewhat familiar with the navigation system, I had to refer to the manual too often. The useable map area is small, and why can you zoom out to a view of the Northern Hemisphere? How useful is that? If you have to consult the nav system to find out what hemisphere you're in, well...
■ Thomas Voehringer

The powertrain is a little rough when you do weird things (abruptly get off the gas while accelerating for instance), but otherwise it's a hoot to drive. Gears one and two feel very short, but all the shifts have a smooth, uninterrupted feel.
■ Ed Loh

2008 Chrysler Town & Country LTD

POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS	
Drivetrain layout	Front engine, FWD
Engine type	V-6, alum block/heads
Valvetrain	SOHC, 4 valves/cyl
Displacement	241.2 cu in/3952 cc
Compression ratio	10.3:1
Power (SAE net)	251 hp @ 6000 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	259 lb-ft @ 4100 rpm
Redline	6000 rpm
Weight to power	18.5 lb/hp
Transmission	6-speed automatic
Axle/final-drive ratios	3.25:1/2.24:1
Suspension, front; rear	Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar; twist beam, coil springs
Steering ratio	16.9:1
Turns lock-to-lock	3.1
Brakes, f;r	11.9-in vented disc; 12.0-in disc, ABS
Wheels	6.5 x 17 in, cast aluminum
Tires	225/65R17 100T Bridgestone Turanza EL400 M+S
DIMENSIONS	
Wheelbase	121.2 in
Track, f/r	65.0/64.8 in
Length x width x height	202.5 x 78.7 x 68.9 in
Turning circle	38.0 ft
Curb weight	4633 lb
Weight dist, f/r	56/44%
Seating capacity	7
Headroom, f/m/r	39.8/39.7/37.9 in
Legroom, f/m/r	40.6/36.3/31.8 in
Shoulder room, f/m/r	63.0/64.7/62.0 in
Cargo volume beh, f/m/r	140.6/83.0/32.7 cu ft
TEST DATA	
Acceleration to mph	
0-30	2.8 sec
0-40	4.2
0-50	5.8
0-60	8.1
0-70	10.7
0-80	14.0
0-90	17.7
Passing, 45-65 mph	4.1 sec
Quarter mile	16.3 sec @ 8.65 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	135 ft
Lateral acceleration	0.70 g (avg)
MT figure eight	30.1 sec @ 0.52 g avg
CONSUMER INFO	
Stability/traction control	Yes/yes
Airbags	Dual front, f/m/r crtn
Basic warranty	3 yrs/36,000 miles
Powertrain warranty	Unlimited
Roadside assistance	3 yrs/36,000 miles
Fuel capacity	20.5 gal
EPA city/hwy econ	17/25 mpg
CO_2 emissions	0.98 lb/mile
Recommended fuel	Unleaded regular





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- Chrysler 300 2.7L ('04-'08)...... Part# 33-2295
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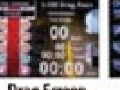
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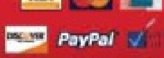
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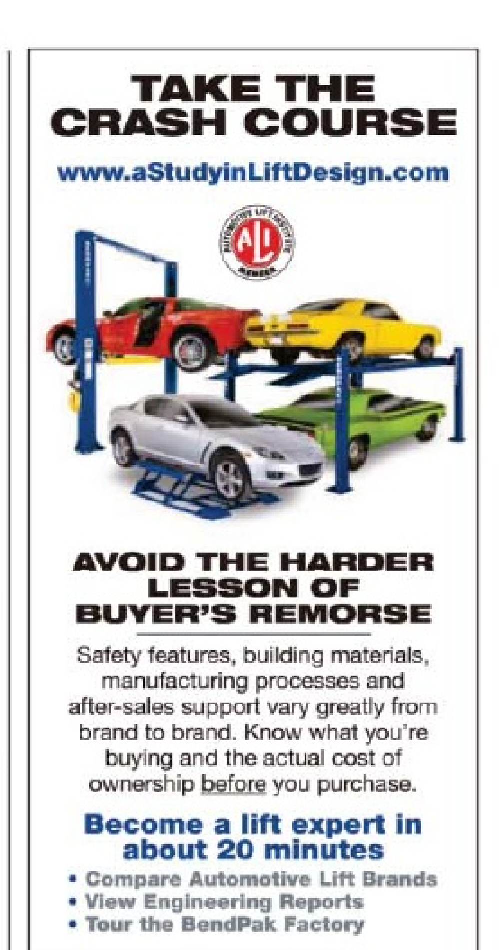
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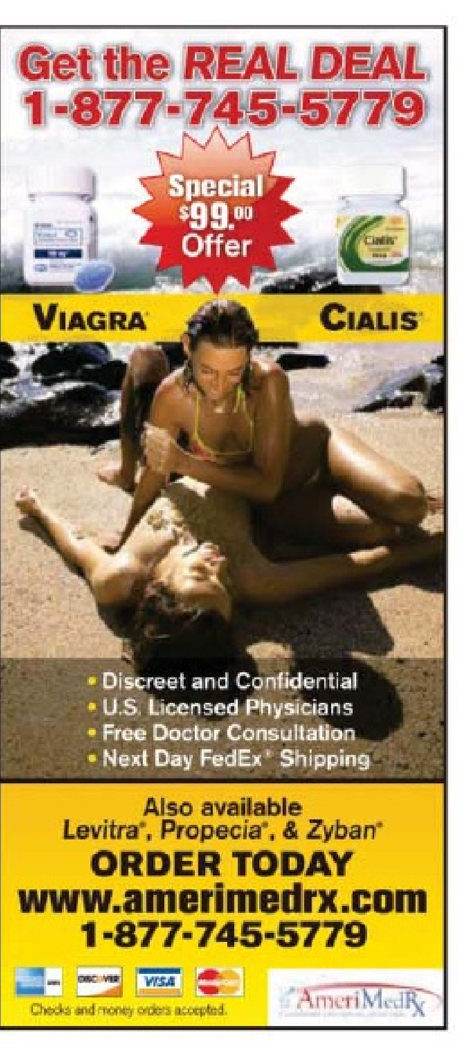


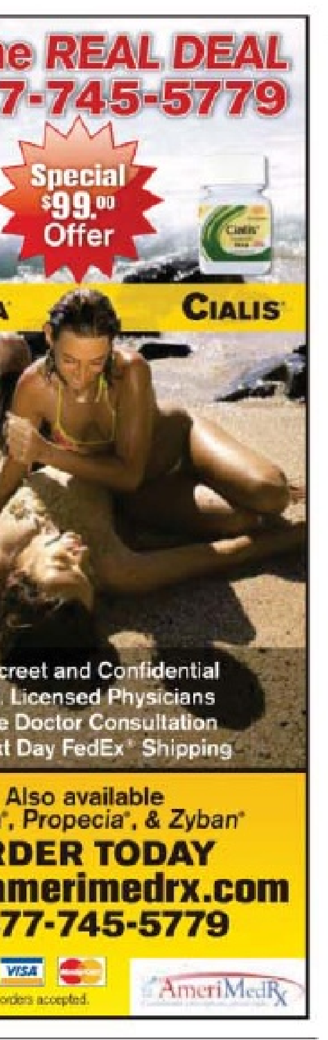
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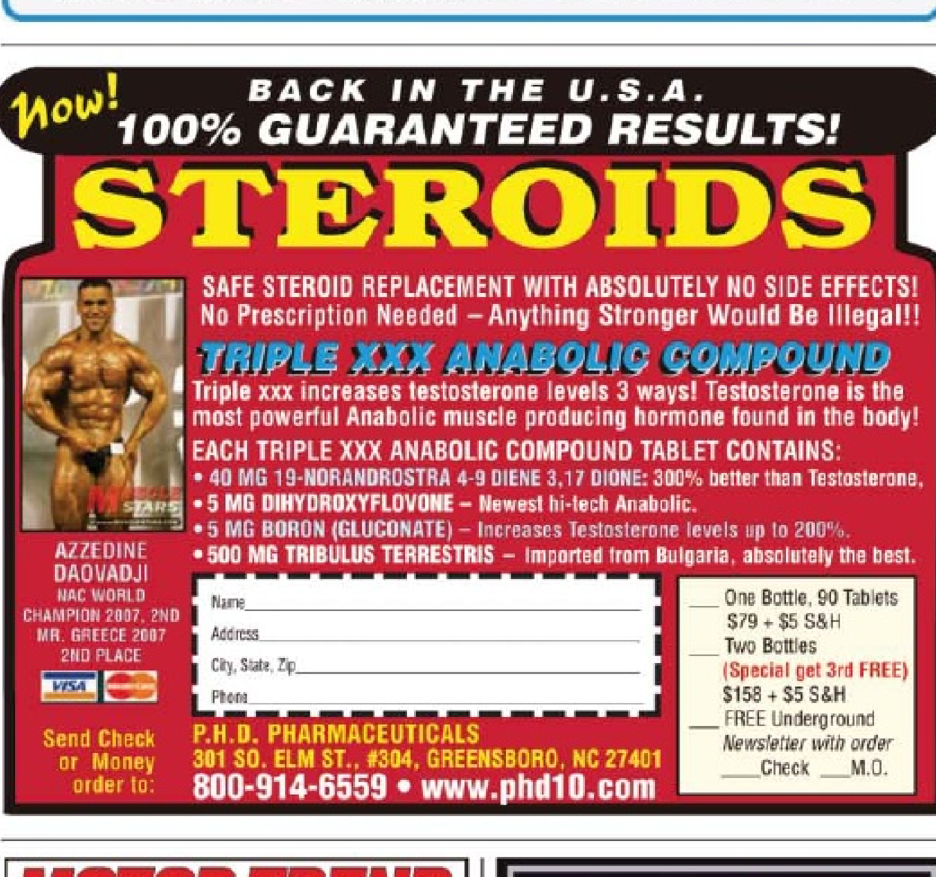
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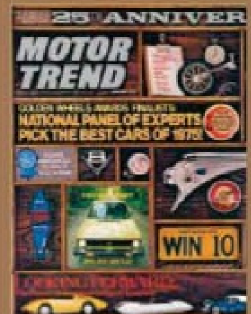
MOTOR TREND ARCHIVES

hard-working horsey

Raptor latest in a lineup of mud-slinging Ford trucks

IT WAS SHORT, light, with an engine bay tailormade for a V-8 engine. Ford's Bronco first came to market in 1966, the same year a group of California based off-road enthusiasts founded National Off-Road Racing Association. The new organization's first major event was the Mexican (later Baja) 1000 in 1967, a crazier-than-thou romp beginning in Tijuana, then racing from Ensenada to La Paz. Ford race-car builder Bill Stroppe and Indy 500/ Trans-Am legend Parnelli Jones were the most notable pair running Broncos in Baja, winning the 1971 and '72 Baja 1000 plus other races in a tube-framed, pure-racing machine named Big Oly—after its sponsorship by Olympia Breweries. But they weren't the only Bronco busters. One such effort was that of Rodney Hall and Larry Minor. Hall won the inaugural Mexican 1000 and went on to win many more. Minor also later won in Baja and enjoyed great success as an NRHA team owner. Note *MT* sponsorship sticker on the right-front fender. ■

coverage january 1975



Our editors, for some strange reason, chose to celebrate *Motor Trend*'s 25th anniversary in the January 1975 issue. This is odd because, if you begin with our first issue date, September 1949, and add two-and-a-half decades, you will arrive at September 1974. No matter, the cover image here is that of an actual shadowbox that was built to commemorate the occasion. It is still prominently on display in our editorial offices.

MOTOR TREND (ISSN 0027-2094)
November 2009, Vol. 61, No. 11 Published monthly by Source Interlink Media, LLC, 261 Madison Avenue, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year (12 issues): U.S., APO, FPO, and U.S. possessions $18. Canada $31 (price includes surface mail postage to Canada and GST—reg. no. 872093125RT0001). All other countries $33. For address changes and subscription assistance: Motor Trend, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235, 800/800-6848 (U.S.), 386/447-6383 (intl.); motortrend@emailcustomerservice.com. Please include name, address, telephone number on any inquiries. To order back issues, logon to www.primediabackissues.com or write: Motor Trend Back Issues, 2900 Amber Lane, Corona, CA 92882. Cost: $6 each, plus $3 shipping and handling. Please specify magazine and issue date. If this is not specified, your check/money order will be returned to you. Wait 3-4 weeks for delivery.
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